THE AUTHORIAL PERSONA: A Truth Conditional Account.

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A B S T R A C T

This thesis proposes that there is a narrative stance distinguishable from other narrative stances, and to which the term persona can be correctly applied. This stance is determined by recourse to the perceiver's view of the author (called herein the reader's author), rather than by recourse to the biographical author. In order to determine to what the term persona should apply a number of prior investigations are carried out. Firstly, the relationship of the author to his text, and in particular to his narrators, is examined, including a summary of the problems raised by attempts at self-expression. The sociological view of the term, and sociological attitudes to the question of identity, its expression and perception, are also discussed. Secondly, contemporary uses of the term persona in literature are investigated, and three different applications are found to exist:

(i) The Inevitable Persona.

(ii) The Persona of Decorum.

(iii) The Persona of Impersonation.

From these applications, proceeds a survey of how these concepts were manifested before persona was coined in the criticism of poetry and prose.

This thesis then turns to consider narrative in terms of its truth conditions, and details the truth conditions of a distinct narrative stance to which the term persona could be properly applied. Before testing the truth

conditions of the three concepts to which the term has been applied, the reader who is to perceive the texts is defined. The three applications of the term persona are then examined for their truth conditions, and only one is found to refer to a distinct narrative stance distinguishable from other stances. It is therefore concluded that the term persona has been too widely applied, and that by the use of a truth conditional account of narrative a more restricted and useful application can be achieved. The textual and contextual markers which lead the reader to postulate the existence of a persona are then detailed.

Finally three illustrative examples are presented, and the theory is found to have explanatory value.

P R E F A C E

In writing about the concept of "persona", it is necessary to discuss the contemporary view of the concept before establishing just how it manifested itself in earlier eras. This inversion is necessary, since the term was applied to literature other than drama (with its use in the phrase "dramatis persona") only comparatively recently in literary history. For this reason, I have laid out this thesis in order to answer the following questions:

> What is a persona and how is it related to the author? How is the term applied outside literature and how do these applications help us understand the term's literary applications? (Chapter 1)
>
> When and why was the term coined? To what does the term now apply? (Chapter 2)
>
> How, if at all, did the concept of "persona" exist before the "invention" of the term? (Chapter 3)

I then go on to examine the problems that arise from these questions namely:

> How do we distinguish a persona from other types of narrators? How do we define the perceiver of the persona? What is the relationship between irony and the use of persona? (Chapter 4)
>
> What are the indications that the reader perceives which lead him to postulate a persona in a text? (Chapter 5)

Having established what these markers are, the narratives of selected texts are examined to demonstrate how the theory developed in the earlier chapters can be applied in practical criticism. (Chapters 6, 7 and 8)

In attempting a work such as this, it is inevitable that some prior assumptions will be made. It is proper that these should be declared at the outset.

I have attempted to isolate the types of narrators to which the term persona is applied, and to establish just how we recognise these types of narrators when we read. As a result it has been necessary to adopt an essentially synchronic rather than diachronic approach to the material; that is, once the area of applicability has been ascertained, it is true in all texts at all times in history. This may seem excessively doctrinaire, but I see no alternative short of a definition for each era which will then require a further breakdown and so on, until ultimately each text (or part of a text) will have its own unique criteria for establishing what kind of narrator exists. Then, what is seen as an ironical persona in one work would be, with identical evidence, the author speaking in his own voice in another, or in another time.

By the same token, if my schema is reliant on a universal application of the concept based on markers that are evident in a text, it is assumed that in the main, details of the author's life will be inadmissible evidence. As such I am proposing a corollary to the "biographical fallacy", for it seems to me that if critics

have mistakenly used biographical details in establishing meaning in literature, they have erred just as much in using such details to prove or disprove the existence of a persona in a work.

I would not, however, insist that an author is not in a text, but would hope to define just how he is in it. A text is an artistic expression and should be described and evaluated according to its own formal qualities. I believe that such a formalist approach can establish the nature of an author in a text without becoming an exercise in sociological, historical, psychological or biographical investigation. Like the French critic Genette "I do not mean to suggest that the narrative content of the Recherche has no connection with the life of its author, but simply that this connection is not such that the latter can be used for a rigorous analysis of the former (any more than the reverse)." (Narrative Discourse, 1980, p. 28.)

In selecting illustrative examples, one is always open to the criticism that the selections were made only from those texts which support the view proposed. The only defence I can make to this criticism is to point to the theoretical chapters in the hope that they argue in a sufficiently objective and convincing way to mitigate against this charge. Selection was made principally from the most contentious cases in order to best test and illustrate the preceding theoretical discussion. No case is made for a good or bad persona or a good or bad work. There has been much discussion (Ehrenpreis in "Personae"

being one signal instance) about whether the use of a persona qualifies a work as better or worse, more or less sophisticated. No such attempt will be made here. For the purposes of this thesis a persona either exists or does not exist; no qualitative judgement will be attempted. Neither will the question posed by Wimsatt ("Genesis: a Fallacy Revisited", in On Literary Intention, p. 127) and mentioned by Cruttwell ("Makers and Persons", Hudson Review, 1959 - 60, pp. 487 - 507.) as to whether a poem is or says what the poet himself was or thought and is hence good or bad, be addressed. Hence, the artist's sincerity will not be a central concern. Although the ability of the poet to express himself will be considered no evaluation will be attempted.

While not going as far as Susan Sontag (Against Interpretation, New York, 1967) in limiting the function of criticism to the descriptive, I would propose that the "how" and the "what" a piece of writing is, should precede the "what it means". As such, the act of descriptive criticism stands before the acts of interpretation and evaluation within the time scale of the critical act. The aim of this thesis is to consider only the "how" and the "what" of the concept of "persona".

PART I

THEORY AND HISTORY

C H A P T E R O N E

WHAT IS A PERSONA?

> "I am only doing my job as a spokesman. It is what I am given to say that matters, not me."

Mr Ian McDonald, British Ministry of Defence spokesman, commenting on his overnight rise to the status of television celebrity following his issuing of statements on the Falkland Islands war. "The Press", Christchurch, 18 May, 1982, p. 11.

Introduction

The question which forms the title of this chapter is clearly the most fundamental in the area of persona theory. Yet it is also the most difficult to answer. For one commentator it is simple: "By an explicit definition it is a clear fictitious character who is represented as the supposed author of a work."[1]

If we accept this definition, then we accept that the only prerequisites we require to fulfil before we are certain that we are dealing with a persona are

(i) The speaker is clearly fictitious.

(ii) The speaker presents himself as author.

Under such a definition, all narrators who seem, either overtly or by implication, to be in the role of author of their tale (not necessarily the author of a fictitious tale) are, willy-nilly, classified as personae. Later it will be demonstrated that such a definition is insufficient; that of the prerequisites set out above, (i) is often impossible to establish in any but a subjective way, while (ii) is necessary but not sufficient. It could be argued that Ewald's definition does not exclude the possibility that a persona can be other than the first person speaker, but for the sake of clarity I have assumed that that is not the case. What is indubitable is that the definition we have been examining does not exclude any first person narrators from the ambit of the term persona, since the existence of such a narrator must tacitly assert

the role of author for that narrator.

Clearly a more restrictive definition is needed. This definition will need to distinguish a type of narrator who is identifiably different from the larger set of first-person narrators but who will be a subset of that larger set. The intention is to establish a clearly delineated type of narration (or rather narrator) to which the term persona can be applied. "Anyone", as Robert Elliot correctly notes, "looking seriously at the controversies over the persona quickly sees that much argument is terminological rather than substantive. Opponents are not agreed on what their central term means."[2] The first task then is to determine just what a persona is.

In order to move towards some kind of definition of the term, I began by making the assumption (valid I think in retrospect) that a persona would be limited to first person narrators. However this in turn raised the prior question: are there any stories which do not have a first person narrator? In M. Sternberg's opinion, "the myth of 'first-person' as opposed to 'third-person' narrators, is invalid on any conceivable ground."[3] Despite the widespread use of the terms first, and third person narration, it is clear that whenever we read we assume an "I" who is speaking to us even when no first person pronoun is used. The term third person narrative only refers to the predominance of the third person pronoun in the narration, and the term first person narration to a similar

predominance of first person pronouns. The only possible type of narration is that delivered by an "I" (or "us").

If we have no evidence of the narrator except the minimal properties required for narration, that is, that he can speak or write in the language of the text, has a particular style etc., then even if we call this narrator a third person narrator we are in fact dealing with a first person narrator who never uses the first person pronoun. Georges Poulet recognises this when arguing that we identify with the "I" we assume to be there. "Whenever I read I mentally pronounce an 'I' and yet the 'I' which I pronounce is not myself. This is true even when the hero of a novel is presented in the third person and even when there is no hero and nothing but reflections or propositions; for as soon as something is presented as thought, there has to be a thinking subject". [4] It will be seen that the establishment of this principle of the universality of an "I" behind all communication is crucial in the later discussion of authors and their personae. The opposing view is illustrated by Tillyard and Lewis who in the introduction to The Personal Heresy hold that when poetry is read as it should be, the reader has before him no representation which claims to be the poet, and frequently no representation "of a man, a character, or a personality at all."[5]

Accepting that there is an "I" behind every narrative, the degree of identification between this "I" and the artist must be considered. At the most fundamental level

there must be a link between the art and the artist, since writing is impossible if we deny that the artist can draw upon the accumulated experiences of his life, including his own imaginative experiences. An artistic creation can never, then, be wholly separate from the artist, if only because the creative process itself becomes part of his experience. Having recognised this link it is a decision of a different order as to whether this connection is pursued in terms of the link between the artist and an "I" which appears in a text.

The Author In His Text

In searching for an example where the narrator is identified indistinguishably with the author who created him, the following assertion by Walt Whitman must be compelling, however strongly the reader holds the view that authorial intentions are inadmissable aids to criticism. In writing Leaves of Grass, Whitman aimed to

> articulate and faithfully express in literary or poetic form, and uncompromisingly, my own physical, emotional, moral, intellectual and aesthetic Personality ... and to exploit that personality, identified with place and date, in a far more candid and comprehensive sense than any hitherto poem or book. [6]

Despite such an unequivocal statement, very persuasive arguments can be advanced for not accepting Whitman's own objective as either attained or attainable. In writing on Whitman himself, the critic James Miller opined that "no man's life was ever captured and placed between the covers of a book. The real substance of life, the spiritual involvements and the emotional undercurrents, the inner vision and the intimate prophecies - these deepest elements of a man's life must of necessity by their very nature escape recording."[7] Of course, what Whitman in fact did in his autobiographical Leaves Of Grass was to fashion a picture of himself which was larger than life, containing incidents which were either fictional or were imaginative transformations of the truth, or rather of actuality. Then, having worked this figure in words he attempted to

live the fiction: a case perhaps of the persona defining the artist. Not that Whitman was unaware of the problem of transcribing the self. At the beginning of Leaves of Grass he muses:

> (And as if any man really knew aught of my life,
> Why even I myself I often think has little or nothing of my real life,
> Only a few hints, a few diffused faint clews and indirections
> I seek for myself to trace out here.)
>
> "When I Read The Book," Lines 4 - 8

In brief, what Miller is saying, is that the artist cannot be transported in his actuality into a work of fiction, because the true personality is per se inexpressible.

But an attack on the possiblity of an artist inhabiting his work in his actual form can be made from another angle. The basis for this second attack is that every speaker in a work of fiction must, as a consequence of inhabiting a fictive world, be fictive himself. We may want to see the work we read as springing from the "I" we read in that work, but by his single existence in the fiction the "I" assumes all the fictiveness of the work he purports to write, and we are forced to conclude along with Wright, that the speaker must always be "wholly a product, and only apparently a source," of his tale.[8] A poet's name "may be simply 'I'; but that again is a part of poetic creation."[9]

The Russian formalist M.M. Bakhtin supports Wright's

view. He maintains that although the "author-creator" can represent the world from many points of view, when he attempts to speak in direct authorial discourse he can only represent events as if he had seen them, as if he were an omnipresent witness to them. He goes on to say:

> Even had he created an autobiography or a confession of the most astonishing truthfulness, all the same he, as its Creator, remains outside the world he has represented in the work ... The represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary works is to be found.[10]

Parallels can be found in the sociological concept of role-playing. The assumption that a persona exists presupposes that there is a quintessential author, particularly if we attempt to define that persona by some criterion of isolation or distinction from the author. That such a quintessential author does exist, or in sociological terms that the essential self does exist, is open to debate. Equally the sociologist can argue that any attempt by "real life" people to communicate involves a level of fictionalisation as soon as a medium of communication is employed.

A third attack on the possibility of an author expressing his actuality in a work of literature has been launched based on aesthetic rather than philosophical considerations. This third attack contends that it is artistically preferable to create a mask or persona, rather than to recreate the self. Oscar Wilde, while believing in

the existence of a "real I" found people's masks more interesting, and in a less mannered way, J. Kirchner, in an analysis of the Byronic persona, maintains that the voice of the speaker is always separate from the poet's whether identified or not. She does allow the poet discretion to determine the extent to which a persona can resemble him, while insisting that "[t]o remain true to his artistic self, the poet cannot transcribe his socio-religious self with minute accuracy. Even when he may think he has done precisely that, he has actually done both more and less." [11] George Parfitt sees a similar aim in Ben Jonson's poetry, in that "the poetic drive is to fashion a public poet-figure rather than to reveal the quiddities of self."[12] This view is supported by Douglas Duncan, who holds that, "[f]or Jonson the idea that the poet should express the man in his naked human essence had no meaning at all, since in his view the mere act of writing a poem, however slight, was a claim to the superhuman status of being a 'maker'."[13] Although Duncan refers to the idiosyncratic historical figure Jonson for his authority, C. S. Lewis is more general in his contention that the poet's "own personality is his starting-point, and his limitation and while he remains there and is merely a personality all is still to do."[14] "No artist produces great art by a deliberate attempt to express his personality" is T.S. Eliot's clear statement on the topic.[15]

To summarise, three reasons have been advanced as to

why an author cannot put himself in his text *in propria persona*:

(i) The essential self is inexpressible.

(ii) Fiction is fictive so *per se* everything within it must be too.

(iii) Accurately transcribing the "self" would compromise the art.

If any of these reasons is accepted, then as a consequence there will be a need to define a persona by means other than by recourse to the author's "real self". (In the case of (iii) this will be an aesthetic rather than a philosophical need.) This creates what at first seems to be an irreconcilable paradox, since the very essence of a persona lies in its relationship to the author, an author who cannot ever be in his work in his "true" guise.

The solution this thesis will advocate is that the author can exist in his works other than as his actual self; that the words on the page can imply the author, or as G.T. Wright put it, the author must create a formal structure whose import is the author.[16] The only way an author can penetrate the work and express his viewpoint is to imply rather than state outright; the same is true of the author's presentation of himself.

Such views of the author's place in his text do have their opponents. Montaigne for instance held to the view that a book should be "consubstantial" with the author and that the hand of the writer is always evident in the shape of the letters.[17] Such a claim reads as a truism, and

indeed I would not take issue with it. But there is little compelling reason for not limiting the applicability of the consubstantiality to that inevitable art-artist link I have mentioned before, without necessarily also applying it in an effort to deny the possibility of distancing, or impersonality in writing, or any of the literary methods of indirection which achieve any kind of separation between the author and his fiction. As Wayne C. Booth points out, Montaigne rejects "any simple distinction between fiction and biography or essay," and indeed Montaigne himself said he intended to "present me to your Memory, such as I naturally am".[18] Yet Montaigne (or is it his persona?) admits that "In moulding this figure upon my self, I have been so oft constrain'd to temper and compose my self in a right posture, that the Copy is truly taken, and has in some sort form'd it self. But painting for others, I represent my self in a better colouring than my own natural Complexion."[19] What we will later see the Bom discover about storytelling in A Soldier's Tale and we are to discover of the Bom, Montaigne realises in his unwillingness to reflect his own "natural Complexion".

If we embrace Montaigne's view of the complete identification of the author and his work unreservedly, then however much an author may try to disguise it, the persona will become a fascinating veil, through which we readers can test the acuteness of our critical vision by the success we have in glimpsing the true author: the flesh and blood creator. G.T. Wright is particularly critical of

those critics who attempt to get "behind the mask" to the "man" in order to establish the historical figure whose true nature will then belie the masks and throw light on the real meaning of the work. This he sees as a distortion of the literary purpose of the mask.[20]

On the other hand, if we are willing to treat the work in isolation from its creator then the persona assumes a more concrete existence all its own, where the morals, beliefs and opinions of the author (or more precisely an author: the reader's author) will be of interest only as they are implied through the persona and then perhaps only as contradictions or contra-distinctions of the persona's view.

Narrators and authors, either real, or constructed by a reader, have differing relationships with the text and the reader. All we know about a narrator we learn from the story he tells us. We can know only those things about him which he tells us explicitly, or which we infer that he believes on the basis of the things he has told us. It follows then that when we turn to those things we know about authors, either real, or constructed by a reader, we can only know them by first removing what we know about the narrator.[21] Although there may be things we know which the author and narrator have in common, we can only be sure that the residue (after the removal of those things that we know of the narrator) can be definitely attributed to the author. Some consideration must be given to what we do with those pieces of information we obtain from outside the

text both about the author and about his text. I do not, however, propose to discuss that question here, noting only that different readers will construct different views of the author and his text based on their varying knowledge.

The problem of how "the reader" can be standardized will be considered in a later chapter.

The Reader's Author

In order to remove the real author and his beliefs, I have sugggested that, particularly when dealing with the indirection inherent in the use of fictional narrators, personae, irony, etc., we as readers must construct an author, rather than the author. This author, constructed by the reader from the various evidences he finds in the text (and some evidence supplied by the reader's own context - a point discussed fully in Chapter Four) will, in this thesis be called the inferred, or reader's, author. Such an author will be close in all respects to the implied author which Booth identifies, the author with which we travel "observing as from a rear seat the humorous or disgraceful or ridiculous or vicious driving behaviour of the narrator seated in front. The author may wink and nudge, but he may not speak." In this way a secret communion can be achieved between reader and author.[22] But since I believe that the reader infers the author from the text rather than a text implying an author to the reader then I will use the nomenclature outlined above. It will follow that the reader's author will be inferred differently by different readers.

The reader's author will contain many of the properties often attributed to real authors by commentators who do not invoke the concept as such. Consider the following. In discussing a passage in Wordsworth's Prelude (xi, pp. 302 - 318) Edward Bostetter writes:

> Perhaps Wordsworth intended to suggest that this was the moment at which he became aware of his own identity, just as under similar circumstances, in his meeting with the convict in the graveyard at the opening of Great Expectations, Pip tells us he became aware of the "identity of things" including his own.
>
> When Wordsworth incorporated the incident into The Prelude in 1804 he added two significant passages.[23]

Clearly Bostetter is using his "perhaps Wordsworth" to postulate either a narrator or more likely a sort of reader's author who can be said to intend his text without the spectre of the intentional fallacy rising up before the critic. Or to put it a different way it is a means by which the critic can refer to an author's purposive, rather than purposeful, intent. Whatever the case it is clear that his first reference is of a different order to the Wordsworth who quite definitely added two passages in 1804. Of course the number of commentators who see no such distinction are legion. Take for example the following statement.

> Michael ... is the high point of Wordsworth's narratives. ... Wordsworth dispenses with the fictive narrator, beginning with a direct address to the reader; "If from the public way you turn your steps." Then gradually ... he unfolds the story as significant to his life. [24]

Bertil Romberg, in what is perhaps the most exhaustive study of the first person novel yet attempted, clearly has no doubt that the author can speak directly to the reader. He sees the "I" of Thackeray's Vanity Fair, as being quite separate from the fiction, standing "to one side of it, or rather above it"[25] and believes that the discussions on

the theory of the novel delivered in the novels of Fielding and Diderot, as well as Thackeray, are delivered by the author unmediated by any fictional stance. In a note he does mention the possibility that the authorial "I" should be considered part of the fiction, but concludes that "[i]n a first-person novel, ... the author's 'I' must be characterised as non-fictitious vis-a-vis the fictitious 'I' of the narrator!"[26] The distinction seems a little forced to me, since the "author's I", to use Romberg's terminology, is still potentially fictitious and stands inside the story to the extent that the story he tells in which he tells of himself can be fiction to us but delivered as fact by that speaker.

Certainly Romberg is right in seeing the different levels narrated by the "author's I" on the one hand and the "narrator's I" on the other as being in the same relationship as fact to fiction, but his unwillingness to see the author in the text as another "chinese box" in the fiction is disappointing. The simple explanation, and one that applies to many commentators, is that he sees any interference by the "author's I" in the "I" of the narrator as being to the detriment of the sought-after illusion of reality. But when it leads him to the belief that the speaker in both Dante's Divine Comedy and Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is an author assuming the function of narrator without putting on the latter's mask, then he has gone astray.[27]

In Dante's case, Francis Fergusson underlines Romberg's error when he says "the distinction between Dante speaking as the author, and Dante the Pilgrim, is fundamental to the whole structure." Elliott adds "The Pilgrim is the protagonist of a drama; whereas the author knows the whole story in advance ... the two perspectives providing a kind of stereoptical effect."[28] Later we will see that this effect is crucial to the perception of a persona.

A major error of perception occurs if a reader assumes that the "I" of any narration is the autobiographical author. Literary history is thick with examples and I shall confine myself here to two which also cast some illumination on persona theory.

Frank Ellis, as early as 1951, pointed out the error of one John Hill who, writing in the London Daily Advertiser and Literary Gazette of 5 March 1751, assumed that the author of Gray's "Elegy" and the speaker of the poem were identical. Ellis went on to refute this assumption by listing what we know of the speaker from the poem. He concludes that we know only a minimal number of things:

(i) He is from a different social class and milieu from the peasants who he describes as "rude".

(ii) He is learned enough to make allusions to Dante and Petrarch.

(iii) He is disenchanted with gentility.

(iv) He is scornful of bourgeois art.[29]

Clearly with such a minimal set of properties we cannot say that the speaker is the autobiographical author, or a fully developed character. He is merely a device with the properties we have isolated - nothing more. We assume that these properties have been established by an author and that that author has chosen to give him those properties because he is then suitable or appropriate to the poem's form and content. He is what I will later define as a Persona of Decorum.

The second example I will examine is that of the speaker in Smollett's On Travels through France and Italy (1766). Before the mid-1960s commentators had treated the ill-health, general depression and xenophobia of the speaker as autobiographical, but a number of recent essays have challenged this view. First John F. Sena suggested that the speaker, "although closely resembling the author, has an existence separate from and independent of its creator."[30] This view, though employing a comparison with the actual author, does allow that the author can be defined by recourse to the qualities of the speaker. These qualities are seen by R.D. Spector,[31] as being so limited as to define the speaker less as a character and more as a rhetorical device with a number of characteristics, chief among them patriotism. Scott Rice picked up on the notion of the rhetorical function of the speaker and emphasised both his "appropriateness" and how we are meant to see through him to the author beyond. This is to be achieved

through an awareness of the metaphoric design which has "the satirist as physician to an ailing body politic whose detailed anatomization of luxury in a specimen case is diagnostic and whose recommendations of the opposing virtues is curative."[32]

This dichotomy which must be perceived between the author who created the text and the "I" inferred by the reader is also seen by Tzvetan Todorov who uses the phrase "poetic personality" to refer to the narrator whom we apprehend through the discourse. This "I" he in turn distinguishes from the "I" who speaks in the work, who is only a character. As a consequence he sees "a dialectic of personality and impersonality, between the I of the narrator (implicit) and the he of the character (which can be an explicit I), between discourse and story."[33] Todorov's concept of the "poetic personality" coincides with the first notion of "Wordsworth" we saw adopted by Bostetter above.

To return to our discussion, it can be seen that, once generated, this reader's author can be considered omniscient in a way that no other author or narrator can be. A reader creates for himself an author so he can, if he wishes, ascribe to that construct omniscience both of his text and of the world in which his story is told as known fact. This knowledge can be as particular as the number and nature of repetitions of a phrase, or the number of lines or letters in a text, or as general as facts and opinions not revealed in a text. It is surely this kind of

generated author who critics invoke when they consider the significance of, say, the number of stanzas in Pearl or the central line in Paradise Lost or the function of the Golden Mean in the structure of The Faerie Queene. Hence it is possible to not only talk of the "author" of an anonymous work, but also of the persona that an anonymous text can generate. And it is this, reader's, author who can escape, "deft and refined", leaving any unsavoury aspects of the form or content of a work in the hands of some other, be it speaker or persona.[34] By constructing this author, we avoid that absurdity which makes many commentators uneasy and which Ricoeur labels "the fallacy of hypostasizing the text as an authorless entity,"[35] while acknowledging that this reader-created being is the closest any reader can get to avoiding the fallacy. An attendant advantage of the postulation of the reader's author is the removal of any need to discuss accidental or coincidental meanings, since all meaning is "intended" under this hypothesis.

The Persona And The Author

A persona is, I would argue, an invention in the same way that any dramatis persona is. If we can legitimately sense the Bard's true stance behind the words of Falstaff, or any of his other characters, surely we would not in this era of post-biographical fallacy, construct a vision of the man and then criticise the dramatic character in the light of it. Such criticism is circular, functioning as it does by discussing the text in terms of the author which has already been "created" from the text.

While criticism quite willingly allows a character in a piece of drama to suggest the positives or realities in a text, and, with less enthusiasm a character in fiction to do the same, let a persona be suspected, and criticism has tended to beckon the author and reach for the biographies, in an attempt to verify the persona's views by comparison with some imagined truth resident in the life and beliefs of the author.[36] But if, as I advocate, we treat the persona as a verbal construct, then a persona's views can no more be verified by applications to the author's biography than any other construct, be it a character in a novel or sentiments in a poem. When we perceive a persona we infer an author because our concept of the term presupposes a quintessential author who "adopts" the persona mask. That is only natural. This would be true even if we had not already assumed an author in our reading of a text. What must be avoided is the desire to contrast

the construct with the actual writer. Our emphasis should be on the surface of the mask, and inferences can be drawn from that towards the views of the author since a persona is part of a book, a fictional product, and not part of a writer.

Having said that, it is important to stress that a persona's ability to imply an author is not a totally positive implication. The similarities between irony and persona will be discussed more fully later, but the point I would underline here is the necessary negativity of the relationship between the persona's views and those of the author's, which parallels what Kierkegaard, using Hegel's terminology, refers to as the "infinite absolute negativity" of irony.[37] The indirection inherent in both irony and persona-use, means that something other than a "truth" must be stated, and then not directly, but only by showing something that is not the truth. Although a persona may not achieve the infinite negativity of irony, certainly even the use of a persona who differs from the author only in some minor locatable detail is employing a negative (what is not part of the author), to imply a positive. What is essential is that we see the persona in relation to an inferred reader's author, rather than in relation to a possible real life author. In this way, as I have already pointed out, it is possible to derive a persona from an anonymous work in a way that would be impossible if a real author were part of the necessary prerequisites of persona recognition.

Having divorced the necessity of defining the persona from known facts of the author's life and times, I will now look at the uses to which the term has been put, both in and out of literature and criticism to assess whether in fact there is any consistency in the use of the terminology and hence whether a number of different concepts are collected under the umbrella term persona and if so, whether the term would be better applied more narrowly.

The Persona In Sociology

> Since no-one is someone without a disguise,
> And the truths of the parlour in the bedroom are lies
> And my everyday self is a shoddy disgrace
> I have put on these masks to show you my face.
>
> Maurice English, Midnight of the Century

The term persona is widely applied in sociology to describe the roles adopted by individuals in different circumstances. The politician, the lover, the parent, are all different roles played and available to one "self". The New Zealand poet and critic James K. Baxter sees these "selves" which a man adopts in a given situation as a sort of tribal mask.[38]

Although life is intrinsically non-fiction by definition, social intercourse involves the use of a medium of communication which fictionalises the message. In its simplest form, this concept is illustrated by the inability of the word "love" to be completely consubstantial with the emotion "love" irrespective of any role-playing, irony, circumstance or audience related distortions which could come into play.

In contrast with fiction, the communication of "real events" does presumably remove one of the levels of fictionalisation. All fiction, conveyed to a reader through the medium of language involves a fictionalisation per se that occurs before the fictionalisation involved in the creation of fiction in the form of fictional occurrences; fictionalisation which springs from both the

inability of a mode or medium of communication to be consubstantial with the idea communicated, in combination with the arbitrariness of the choice of that segment of the communicated medium to represent that communicated idea.[39]

The first of these levels of fictionalisation is the equivalent of the medium of communication in a social setting and involves the universal discrepancy between, in A.C. Howell's terminology, "verba and res."[40] If we accept the inevitable fictiveness of communication then it becomes a truism to say that whenever we have a speaker he is never the flesh and blood person, but some sort of fictional narrator. So, whenever we deal with the word "I" we deal with a persona both in life and in literature. This view is held, not just by Saussurian linguists, but by sociologists as well. For example, Daniel Albright tells us that "all verbal analogies will necessarily fail to be congruent with the personality depicted, even if we imagine the perfect verbal act of self-expression, in which a mind capable of knowing its operations exactly discovered a pattern of words the form of which was identical to the form of the mind's operation ... "[41]. Elsewhere he makes a similar claim. "No verbal analogue of personality, even if it reaches for a thousand pages, can claim without presumptuousness to be faithful to any real personality." [42] Unfortunately this first order, or "Inevitable Persona" as I will call it, is of limited use to the literary critic once its existence is philosophically established.

What I will call, for the moment, second order personae are much more interesting for the literary critic. These are the role adoptions that we all employ every day. Whether we are aware of it or not, we all use a different role or self-image when talking to an intimate than we do when talking to a stranger, to a crowd than to a single person and so on. These second order personae of sociology are of relevance to the literary critic when it comes to the contention as to whether these adopted roles are fictional and therefore separate from our "true", quintessential selves, or, as a group, represent the totality of the self. For as we have seen, the term persona presupposes a quintessential author, in the same way that a sociological role presupposes a quintessential self. If a "self" that is the author were denied by a study of the social human, then the power of the persona to refer to a quintessential author would be severely reduced.

The use of the term "role adoption," seems to suggest that these roles are somehow derivations from our real selves, but is it possible to separate out such a self, or are all these roles integral parts of the personality? Are we, in other words, just a bag of personae, or is there an essential "I" within us, which can act the role of academic, politician, lover and so on? Is our essential personality to be defined only as "the integration of all the traits which determine the role and status of the person in society?"[43] In which case is "[t]he I," as Paul Valery speculates, "no more than a conventional notion

empty as the verb to be"?[44] Or is there a "fiery particle" which exists outside the totality of our experience?[45] That some literary critics have assumed the existence of a real self seems unwisely presumptuous in the light of these, as yet, unanswered questions.[46]

Geiwitz believes that there is a personality which he sees as the "dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to his environment."[47] The key word here is "unique" and Geiwitz in no way proves that the self is capable of such "unique adjustments" - only that if it did it would have personality. A definition of role is provided by Ralph Linton who sees it as the "dynamic aspect of a status", or in other words some position that we recognise carried into action through a person.[48] (This emphasis on the observer as role definer has parallels in literary criticism with the upsurge in interest in recent years of the position of the reader in textual interpretation, and parallels the emphasis placed above on the position as the reader as the definer of the author). The sociologist E. Goffman further divides roles into the static role, and the role-performance.[49] The static role is the activity the individual would engage in were he "to act solely in terms of the normative demands of [someone in] his position", while a role-performance is the "actual conduct of a particular individual while on duty in his position."

Although the application of sociological jargon to

literary concerns will be resisted, Goffman's analysis does at least shed some light on an approach to persona criticism. The sociological role is seen by Goffman as observer-defined, just as I advocate the persona should be, rather than creator defined. However in real life we know for certain that there is a person behind the role who at least resembles the voice or role in some way, and is inseparably linked to the exercise of that role. Such is not the case in literature where we can establish to our own satisfaction the existence of a persona with no certainty of the existence of an author. The closest a "real life" role can come to a literary creation is in the speech and actions of a confidence trickster and of course this is as much fiction as is an actor's role on the stage; both are "fictively adopted role performances" in Goffman's terminology.

The examples of Walt Whitman and Ernest Hemingway, who both to some extent lived their creations, lead us to conjecture whether there can be seen such a relationship between the social roles we adopt and the "real self." Helen Perlman, in establishing a relationship between the "person" (someone who is aware of self) and the "personae" (that is the roles and functions by which he makes himself known to others), does concede that while some of the masks are readily detachable, others become "fused with the skin and bone."[50] Talcott Parsons reinforces this view from a behavioural psychologist's standpoint. He observes that patterns learned in interaction with others become part of

the personality. The child, by internalising the reciprocal role-interaction pattern with a mother, becomes able to assume the mother (alter) role. First the child adopts the role in play and later in reality; the role becomes the reality.[51] It would appear that in an unconscious way, writers corroborate Philip Hobsbaum's contention that "psychologists and writers are first cousins. What the clinical psychiatrist diagnoses and the social psychologist observes, the writer recreates and sets down on paper."[52] In fact it has even been suggested that the increased use of masking and persona use (however that can be measured) is tied to the breakdown of Judeo-Christian values and ethics and the genuine uncertainty and fragmentation of personality.[53]

Ultimately the literary critic is on firmer ground than the social scientist, since the latter does not have the right to treat the persona as a purely artistic creation, but must always relate it to a real self despite Jung's assertion that "the persona is nothing real" but merely "a compromise between an individual and society as to what a man should appear to be."[54]

So we are faced with two problems, both of which are crucial to literary theory as well.

(i) Is the self identifiable and unique?

(ii) Is the self expressible, or can it express itself?

While the first of these problems will underpin the ability of a reader to see an author behind his words, it will be the second which will be of more interest to the

reader of fiction, since, as we have seen, to some critics at least it is answered by the first of the three reasons previously advanced (page 9), as to why the author cannot be in his text in propria persona; viz., the essential self is inexpressible.[55]

A contrary view has been expressed by certain psycho-analytic critics, who see all modes of self-expression, including those employing a persona, as conscious or unconscious revelations of the self. C.J. Rawson, in his provocative essay "Order and Cruelty"[56] moves in this direction when he says that although Swift and Johnson "had no consciously formulated sense that traditional values cannot any longer apply" this only "partly explains the tendency of Swift's 'gratuitous' effects to dovetail into a moral argument."[57] He argues that Swift's power comes from his ability to mimic the excesses in style and thought in a satire which ultimately embraces human nature and himself. Rawson concludes, "we would do worse than entertain the thought that Swift, ... was and sensed that he was, in all rebellious recalcitrance, himself a Yahoo."[58] It is, then, the tincture of evil, of the satiric butt in Swift himself, that breaks through the surface of the Dean of St. Patrick's and gives such power to Grub street writers, Proposers, Projectors, or whoever Swift creates to speak. The broom does get dirty in the sweeping. Louis D. Rubin suggests that it is understanding of, rather than identification with, the subject which is necessary, but

also mentions a need for sympathy:

> To dissect something well, one must understand it, and in order to understand something one must have a certain amount of sympathy with it; but does this argument make, say, William Faulkner into a racist, or Stendhal into an ultra-royalist?[59]

Or Swift into a Grub-street hack? The answer must be no.

It remains for the psychologists to determine to what extent psycho-analysis can find motives for writing in all its manifestations of style and word choice in the psychology of the writer. Taken to the extreme the application of such techniques to criticism would free the world of persona criticism, since any speaker, however fictitious he may be at first glance, may be seen to spring directly from the psyche of his creator. Literature becomes at this point another social role, obscuring but at the same time revealing the true nature of the patient/author to the psychologist/critic. The psychologist J. Laird quotes Butler's The Way of all Flesh, approvingly when the narrator says: "Every man's work, whether it be literature, or music, or pictures, or architecture, or anything else, is always a portrait of himself, and the more he tries to conceal himself the more clearly will his character appear in spite of him."[60] I believe critics such as Rawson go wrong by confusing the one (social intercourse) with the other (Freudian psychology).

Before any closer comparisons are made between the fictive literary statements and the non-fictive statements

made during social interaction, it is necessary to consider whether we are considering like terms, or comparing distinct phenomena presupposing they are the same. P. S. Morris, discussing Jean-Paul Sartre's concept of a person, has pointed out that in the phrase: "I am a coward" the "I" refers to the "ego as the unity of actions" for which "substance is only caricature".[61] The "I" of literature does not have this unity of past actions to base such a statement on so we as readers naturally but erroneously extrapolate from the statement to the actions. It is in fact arguable that the circumstances involved in the writer-reader interaction are so different from those involved in the speaker-hearer interaction as to make a comparison at least highly suspect. As a result of this discrepancy, the difference between the Sociological Persona and the Literary (fictive) Persona is caused by the same dichotomy as that between speaking and writing in the broadest sense. That being the case the problem of identifying a Persona in writing will face us with the same problem that we face in all writing when we try to establish the existence of a writer. As Paul Ricouer puts it, "the problem of writing is identical to that of the fixation of discourse in some exterior bearer, whether it be stone, papyrus or paper, which is other than the human voice ... whereupon ... The human fact disappears."[62] And as a result "The relation between message and speaker at one end of the communication chain and the relation between message and hearer at the other are together deeply

transformed when the face-to-face relation is replaced by the more complex relation of reading to writing, resulting from the direct inscription of discourse in littera. The dialogical situation has been exploded. The relation writing-reading is no longer a particular case of the relation speaking-hearing."[63] It would follow then, that the fictive literary use of a persona would no longer be a particular case of the use of the persona in the relation speaking-hearing.[64] We are in essence comparing unlike terms.

An attendant problem also suggests itself, and that is how we treat the oft used comparison between drama (as live performance) and written language, particularly since the term persona itself is a direct borrowing from drama for use in criticism of written texts.

If as we have said the elements of spoken and written discourse are so disparate as to be unavailable for comparison, then the same must be said of the elements of drama in performance on the one hand (and also a reading of a poem) and a novel (as well as the text of a play) on the other. When we read we apply our knowledge of life to the extent that we know that a speech requires a speaker. Yet in literature it is the speech which defines our view of the speaker, and the speech alone. As a result we must define our view of the persona (speaker) in terms of the speech (text). It is here that the Sociological and the Literary Critical approach to persona theory diverge.

Here it will be necessary to speak of the persona in

literature only in terms of the utterances it makes.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER ONE

[1] W. B. Ewald, The Masks of Jonathan Swift, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 9.

[2] Robert C. Elliott, The Literary Persona, (London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 18.

[3] M. Sternberg, Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 279.

[4] Georges Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Inferiority", In J.P. Tompkins, Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), pp. 44 - 45.

[5] E.M.W. Tillyard and C.S. Lewis, The Personal Heresy: A Controversy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. iv.

[6] Walt Whitman, "A Backward Glance O'er Travel'd Roads," in Leaves of Grass, eds. Harold W. Blodgett and Sculley Bradley, (New York: New York University Press, 1965), p. 563.

[7] James E. Miller, Walt Whitman, (New York: Twayne, 1962), p. 16.

[8] G.T. Wright, The Poet In The Poem, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), p. 22.

[9] Suzanne K. Langer, Problems of Art, p. 122. Cited in Michael Hamburger, The Truth of Poetry, (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1969), p. 124.

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[11] Jane Kirchner, The Function of the Persona in the Poetry of Byron, (Salzburg: Universitat Salzburg, 1973), p. 3.

[12] George Parfitt, Ben Jonson: Public Poet and Private Man, (London: Aldine Press, 1976), p. 16.

[13] Douglas Duncan, Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 120.

[14] E.M.W. Tillyard and C. S. Lewis, The Personal Heresy: A Controversy, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. ii.

[15] G.T.Wright, The Poet in the Poem, (1960), p. 77.

[16] ibid., p. 8.

[17] Michel de Montaigne, The Essays, trans. John Florio, (New York: AMS Press, 1967), in 3 volumes, p. 392. (Original publication, London: David Nutt, 1892 - 1893).

[18] Montaigne, Essays, p. 718. Also cited in W. C. Booth, Rhetoric of Fiction, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 228.

[19] ibid., p. 543. Also cited in W. C. Booth, Rhetoric of Fiction, p. 228.

[20] G. T. Wright, The Poet in the Poem, (1960), p. 21.

[21] See David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction", American Philosophical Quarterly, 15, No. 1 (January 1978), pp. 37 - 46 for a discussion of the beliefs readers can legitimately bring to texts, including a concept of a community of

origin of beliefs shared by an author and his audience, or more narrowly by an author and his contemporaries.

[22] Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction, (1961), p. 300.

[23] Edward E. Bostetter, The Romantic Ventriloquists, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1975), p. 22.

[24] Karl Kroeber, Romantic Narrative Art, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 80.

[25] Bertil Romberg, Studies in the Narrative Technique of the First-Person Novel, trans. M. Taylor and H. H. Borland, (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962), (Reprinted 1977, Norwood Penn), pp. 5 - 7.

[26] ibid., p. 8, note 16.

[27] ibid., pp. 8 - 11.

[28] Elliott, The Literary Persona, (1982), p. 10, citing Francis Fergusson, Dante's Drama of the Mind, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 9 - 10.

[29] Frank H. Ellis, "Gray's 'Elegy': The Biographical Problem in Literary Criticism", PMLA, 66 (December 1951), p. 989.

[30] John F. Sena, "Smollett's Persona and the Melancholic Traveler: An Hypothesis", Eighteenth-Century Studies, 1 (1968), p. 354.

[31] R. D. Spector, "Smollett's Traveler", Tobias Smollett: Bicentennial Essays Presented to Lewis M. Knapp, eds. G. S. Rousseau and P. G. Bouce, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 238.

[32] Scott Rice, "The Satiric Persona of Smollett's Travels", Studies in Scottish Literature, 10 (1972), p. 40.

[33] Tzvetan Todorov, The Poetics of Prose, trans. Richard Howard, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p. 27.

[34] Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Personae", in festscript to Restoration and Eighteenth Century Literature, ed. C.C. Camden, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1963), p. 29.

[35] Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning, (Texas: Christian University Press, 1976), p. 30.

[36] A problem considered in detail by Walter J. Ong in his article "The Jinnee in the Well-Wrought Urn", Essays in Criticism, 4 (July 1954), p. 311 ff. He points out that "Man's deepest orientation is personal" and that if "you so much as whisper that there is a jinnee in the urn, most onlookers will be only too willing to drop the urn without furthur ado." p. 315.

[37] Soren A. Kierkegaard, The Concept of Irony, with Constant Reference to Socrates, trans. Lee M. Capel, (London: Collins, 1966), p. 63, note 23. "'the infinite absolute negativity' is an integral movement in the dialectic of the Idea, the Idea which negates itself and through this negation emerges as the true affirmation." See also ibid., p. 238 ff. Kierkegaard justifies the definition thus: "It is negativity because it only negates; it is infinite because it negates not this or that phenomenon; and it is absolute because it negates by virtue of a higher which is not. Irony establishes nothing, for

that which is to be established lies behind it." ibid., p. 278.

[38] James K. Baxter, James K. Baxter as Critic, ed. Frank McKay, (Auckland: Heinemann, 1978), p. 44.

[39] See Ferdinand de Saussure, Course in General Linguistics, trans. Wade Baskin, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966) for a detailed discussion on the arbitrariness of language as a representation of realities.

[40] A.C. Howell, "Res et Verba, Words and Things", ELH, 13 (1946), pp. 131 - 142. Cited in K.K. Ruthven, Critical Assumptions, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) p. 13.

[41] Daniel Albright, Personality and Impersonality, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 4.

[42] ibid., p. 308.

[43] E. W. Burgess, Proc. of the Second Colloquium on Personality Investigation, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1930), p. 149. Cited in G. W. Allport, Personality: A Psychological Interpretation, (New York: Henry Holt, 1937), p. 39.

[44] Paul Valery, Preface to Melange, (Paris: 1941), p. 8. Cited in Michael Hamburger, The Truth of Poetry, (1969), p. 67.

[45] Review of Religion and Science, by John Theodore Mery, International Journal of Ethics, 27 (October 1916), p. 126. Cited in Mowbray Allan, T. S. Eliot's Impersonal Theory of Poetry, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), p. 72.

[46] W. B. Ewald for example opines that "any author, or any person, one must assume, has a 'true' or 'genuine' nature.", (The Masks of Jonathan Swift, p. 9.)

[47] P. J. Geiwitz, Non-Freudian Personality Theories, (Belmont, California: Brooks and Cole, 1969). Citing Allport (1937), p. 48.

[48] Ralph Linton, The Cultural Background of Personality, (New York: Apleton-Century, 1945), p. 50.

[49] E. Goffman, Encounters: Two Studies in the Sociology of Interaction, (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1961), p. 85, the essay "Role Distance", pp. 85 - 152 is of particular interest.

[50] Helen Perlman, Personae, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 1.

[51] Talcott Parsons, "Social Structure and the Development of Personality", in Social Structure and Personality, (New York: MacMillan, 1964), pp. 88 - 92.

[52] Philip Hobsbaum, "Playing Games: Bernean Analysis and Literary Criticism", Encounters, (August 1971), p. 90.

[53] See Norman Yates' contribution to the Symposium on "The Concept of the Persona in Satire", Satire Newsletter, (Spring 1966), p. 148 ff, for this contention.

[54] C. F. Monte, Beneath the Mask: An Introduction to Theories of Personality, (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 20.

[55] The question of the true nature of the self in an historical context has been thoroughly covered in J.O. Lyons' The Invention of the Self, (Carbondale: South Illinois University Press, 1978), and will be referred to

in detail in Chapter Three.

[56] C.J. Rawson, Gulliver and the Gentle Reader, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 33 - 59.

[57] ibid., p. 58.

[58] ibid., p. 59.

[59] Louis D. Rubin jr., The Teller in the Tale, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1967), pp. 104 - 105.

[60] J. Laird, Problems of the Self, (London: MacMillan, 1917), p. 1.

[61] P. S. Morris, Sartre's Concept of the Self: An Analytic Approach, (Amherst: University of Massachussetts Press, 1976), p. 88.

[62] Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: discourse and the surplus of meaning, (Texas: Christian University Press, 1976), p. 26

[63] ibid., p. 29.

[64] The problem of the discrepancy between natural and fictive discourse has been discussed by Barbara Smith in more detail in On the Margins of Discourse, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), "Poetry as Fiction", in New Literary History 2, (1970 - 1), pp. 268 - 271 and in "Literature as Performance, Fiction and Art", in Journal of Philosophy, 67 (1970), pp. 553 - 563.

C H A P T E R T W O

THE CONTEMPORARY PERSONA

Introduction

Now that the methodology which this thesis will use to determine the existence of a persona in relation to the author has been established, I wish to turn to a consideration of the recent applications of the term. This chapter will examine the influences which brought about the need for the term to be coined during the Romantic period, and then move on to consider current critical usage of the term. The influential work of George T. Wright will then be used as a starting point to ascertain the breadth of the term's application in recent criticism. Three broad areas of application will be identified and these will be discussed in turn.

The Romantics: The Persona Invented

In his thesis on the development of the persona in English Criticism, G.A. McCann locates the first use of the term "persona" in the pages of The Westminster Review of January, 1830, and I have found nothing to place the date earlier.[1] Important as this single instance may be historically , the formative influences which shaped the need for the concept (which had been so long covert in literary practice) to finally have an epithet, had been more powerful than at any previous time. The Westminster reviewer, as we shall see, was reacting to the pressures rather than taking a bold innovative step himself.

The rejection of the norms of the neo-classical age led to "a new kind of respect for the original and genuine, and hence the personal", bringing with it a devotion to "poetic genius, to the personality, originality, mind and emotion, virtues and vices, life, suffering and death of the literary creator."[2] As such the Romantic revival was seen as "the initial movement of the creative mind in its attempt deliberately to dissociate itself from the realm of collective values and to create itself upon the personal life of the individual."[3] Romanticism,[4] as Herbert Read has perceptively pointed out, became identified with the artist, while classicism was identified with society.[5] Wright believes that by the early nineteenth century the singer/persona has become "the poet, this poet, "I" in all its literal force" and sees this as a move from

the Provencal jongleur who was a persona in that he was a presentation of a man singing of love not of a man in love.[6] The artist, singing as himself, "offers to society ... some knowledge of the secrets to which he had access, the secrets of the self which are buried in every man alike, but which only the sensibility of the artist can reveal to us in all their actuality".[7] But it is the artist's mind which is the centre of interest as it offers a vision of the personal in everyone. As Mowbray Allan saw it, "[t]he Romantics had found in idealist philosophy a way of restoring the human - indeed, the personal - to its place at the centre of creation."[8]

From his new found place at the centre of things the poet, and more particularly the poet's imagination, can expand out into the universe. The poet, in Bostetter's words, is seen as "in reality the divine ventriloquist projecting his own voice as the voice of ultimate truth"[9] fulfilling that "eternal and primary fact of consciousness; man's desire for self-trust, self-expression, self-expansion."[10] This is not to say that the Romantics all held the same view of themselves and their imaginations in the universe. Wordsworth's notion of the "egotistical sublime" turned external object into internal subject, while Keats was the reverse and saw the self absorbed into the object. Coleridge combined the two views in wanting to make Nature thought, and thought Nature.[11]

Once the artist himself asserts his central position in the scheme of things then the combination of this with

the loss of what Bostetter calls the " 'cosmic syntaxes' in the public domain, such as the Christian interpretation of history and the concept of the great chain of being" [12] leaves him claiming both the primacy of his individual experience, and the universality of its application to mankind. As G. H. Hartmann sees it, "the artist is caught up in a serious paradox. His art is linked to the autonomous and individual; yet that same art, in the absence of an authoritative myth, must bear the entire weight of having to transcend or ritually limit these tendencies."[13]

Allied to this romantic interest in the self and its true revelations is an interest in the ability of the poet to speak directly to his audience. As a result the techniques of indirection, particularly irony and the desire to create personae, took a back seat.[14] Yet one view of the persona thrived during the romantic period, and that was of the poet as <u>vates</u> inspired by the muses, nature, or whatever form the divine may take. While the poet was seen as speaking his true feelings in his poetry, he paradoxically believed that inspiration came from without. A full discussion of the origins of the notion of inspiration and its links with persona must wait until Chapter Three, but it is clear that in the Aeolian Harp we have the symbol par excellence of the poet as persona of nature or the Gods. The inspiring force could take different forms for different poets but it is almost always there. For Coleridge, Truth was the divine ventriloquist,

for Blake, his muse, while Shelley claimed that the great poets of his time were, "the priests of an unapprehended inspiration, the mirrors of gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present". As such, Abrams concludes that the romantics "often spoke confidently as elected members of what Harold Bloom calls "The Visionary Company", the inspired line of singers from the prophets of the Old and New Testaments through Dante, Spenser, and above all Milton ... who claimed inspiration from a Heavenly Muse and from the Holy Spirit that had supervised the Creation and inspired the biblical prophets.[15] The Romantics were prepared to be personae or <u>vates</u> for the Gods but rarely elected to adopt personae of their own in a conscious way.

Everything about that testament to the romantic poetic mind, <u>The Prelude</u>, and almost all that has been written about it, is a testament to the belief that the poet can express himself without the medium of a narrator. Nature, the cosmos, the imagination, these are the intermediaries between man (poet) and truth. These are the things which reveal man to himself and the poetry they produce will reveal man to man. Yet some critics, led by G. T. Wright, hold that the Romantic poet in the poem is a pose since he is not the real poet, but an idealised sensitive being who serves as subject for the poems, and whom the poet himself can even imitate in everyday life.[16]

If the poet is so concerned to speak in his own voice, indeed believes perhaps for the first time in English literary history that this is possible and desirable, then

it is understandable that the need arose for a term - the persona - to be coined which would describe what occurs when this felicitous self-expression is not the poet's mode.

However, once this term was coined it came to apply to several different concepts at once, as we shall see in the next section. Oddly, one of these applications refers to the poet expressing himself in the poem - the romantic aim.

The Three Types Of Persona

That some critics see personae everywhere, while others limit the application of the term to just a few works is not a function of the critic or the work, but of the essentially multiple nature of the application of the term persona itself. I have isolated three types of narrator or narration to which the term persona has been applied, and I wish to examine these in more detail now. I have labelled them respectively: The Inevitable Persona, The Persona of Decorum, and The Persona of Impersonation.

Wright On The Poet In The Poem

Any discussion of contemporary Persona theory must acknowledge the pioneering work of G.T. Wright in The Poet in the Poem. Although I have referred to this influential work on many occasions elsewhere, I wish now to examine Wright's contribution to the discussion of the persona, noting how his treatment encompasses the three types of persona discussed hereafter. I will draw on his work again to exemplify some of the points made later in the chapter.

Wright sets as his topic the "various ways in which the poet is present in his poems."[17] After discussing the ways in which poets are in their poems in any age, he considers in three separate sections the work of three modern poets, Eliot, Yeats and Pound, in order to ascertain to what extent their poetry can be considered to be

impersonal and to what extent generalisations about modern poetry and poetry on the whole can be made in light of these three poets' work. It is with the theoretical essay which begins Wright's book that I am concerned here.

"The Faces of the Poet", the essay which makes up the first part of Wright's book begins with the assertion that "full objective knowledge of any person is unattainable." [18] This, Wright argues, does not prevent us from evaluating people on the basis of the information that we have. This is true too of poetry. We merely fit new things into the schemes we are familiar with. So when we are faced with a persona, although we are aware that poems may be spoken by any kind of character, we fit those limits we already know to the limits of the possible types of persona.[19] These limits will be the limits of what we know about people and literature. So in Wright's view, a persona is limited by the expectations and knowledge of the audience which perceives it, and by the choice of the poet, narrowed by those expectations and by the culturally possible roles available to him.[20] As we can see, Wright differs from the essentially perceiver-centred view of the persona adopted by this thesis, by looking at the persona from the poet's point of view.

This is not to say that Wright banishes the role of the perceiver totally, but that he emphasisas that part of perception which he calls "superior to variation."[21]

In the second section of his introductory essay, Wright moves on to discuss the all pervading "I" of

literature whether it is acknowledged or not. All words represent someone talking.[22] This universal existence of a speaker is tied to the principle of decorum and this extends to all literature. A writer "must observe not only the conventions of contemporary utterance and the conventions of contemporary artistic utterance; he must observe also the conventions of all artistic utterance."[23]

Wright distinguishes between lyric and dramatic personae, but since he does not confine his use of the term to authorial personae as we do here, but uses it to cover the full range of speakers in literature, his distinctions are not important in the present context. What is important, however, is his assertion that since art is formal there must always be a distance between the maker of the poem and the persons in that poem.[24] This is because actions represented do not really occur, and "the persons, including the 'I', do not exist outside the poem, or at least do not exist in the same way."[25] What Wright is moving towards, here, is the view discussed in Chapter One - that all elements inside a work of fiction are fictive per se. So, in Wright's resonant words we do not "say ourselves, we make a formal structure whose import will be us" if we wish to express ourselves.[26]

After an examination of the etymology of persona (covered in Chapter Three) Wright moves on to establish that the three elements of speech - fact, tone, and point of view, are often only hinted at or implied. This, he argues, is how we apprehend literature. Not by any overt

statements by any of the characters, but by the recognition of meaning through indirection. And then, not only in irony and satire, but in a great deal of literature.[27] This indirection is inherent in all literature because there are always two levels of speech: one where the characters speak to each other, to an implied audience, and so on, and another level where the writer speaks to us. (This second level, as it is perceived by the audience of a piece of literature, can be equated to the reader's author as it is defined in Chapter One.) For Wright "[t]he poet's point of view is always larger than that of his 'I' for the 'I' ... is only a conventional element in a symbolic context that serves as the formal expression of the poet's view of reality." [28]

Research which attempts to discover the real man behind the poetic persona has value as biographical inquiry but "often overlooks or distorts the specific literary purposes that the mask is designed not to evade but to fulfill," Wright believes.[29] Despite the tendency here to resort to the writer's intentions in justifying the focusing of attention on the literary effect of the mask, the point is well made. But it should be emphasised that at this and other points Wright does not distinguish between the persona which must exist in all writing (what I have called the Inevitable Persona, and which Wright asserts when he says "at least one persona is present in every work of literature"[30]) and the other types of personae which are not an inherent part of the writing

process.

This is not to say that Wright is unaware of these other types of persona. Indeed he talks of a persona which lies at the very source of poetry, this persona springing from the rhetorical devices which appear in poetry. A type of persona which I have labelled the Persona of Decorum.[31] Where Wright does see the poet adopting a double role and using two personae, one of these personae is the "elemental persona" who is "consistently ignorant even of the socially accepted versions of the physical bases of the universe."[32] Wright uses as his models of this persona Gulliver and Prufrock, indicating that he sees this persona as closer to what I have called the Persona of Impersonation than indicating a recognition of the distinction between the Persona of Decorum and the Inevitable Persona.

Wright's perceptive account of the speaker in relationship to what he speaks, also deserves some mention. He recognises, as we shall see later when we consider the truth conditions of fiction, that the words of the mask and those of the reader's author (although of course he does not use the term) are identical: "they issue from two different mouths simultaneously - from the mouth of the mask and from the mouth of the man who wears the mask. Yet even this distinction is not quite accurate. For the poet is not present in the poem."[33]

We saw above that Wright does not distinguish the Persona of Decorum and the Inevitable Persona, but he is

aware of the former. He discusses the poet which a reader perceives when he reads satire, for instance, but does not consider the possibility that the reader may postulate another persona (the reader's author) behind the apparent picture of the poet that is created decorously for the particular medium. Wright, I believe, mistakenly allows a strong association between the poet as presented and the poet as perceived by a reader; a poet which for some readers could differ significantly from the one presented in the poem.

When dealing with the lyric, Wright makes a clear distinction between the "two specific personalities that define every work of art: that of the speaker and that of the implicit poet."[34] Where he errs is in not allowing for the possible discrepancy between an impression of an author created by a decorous representation and the reader's author who may be at one remove.

From what has gone before we can see that despite certain reservation, Wright has made a significant contribution to the history of persona theory in this introductory essay. He has pointed out the universal inevitability of the persona in art, and the existence of personae dictated by the mode or medium of expression, and of the Persona of Impersonation as it is defined in this thesis (although he does not make these distinctions). All of which has also contributed to a move away from a treatment of all writing as the true expression of the flesh-and-blood writer, to a realisation of the importance

of treating the speaker in its own right.

In the second half of his essay "The Faces of the Poet" Wright moves on to consider the personae of the dramatic monologues of Browning which, as I have pointed out elsewhere, are beyond the scope of this study, owing as they do more to the traditions of drama than to prose fiction. His work in this area did, however, contribute to the widespread acceptance of the term persona albeit, in terms of this paper, a misapplication of the term.

Wright concludes his theoretical discussion with the interesting hypothesis that a poetic persona is defined by the period in which it is written and perceived, noting a tendency which moves the persona down through the social strata from the courtly Chaucerian speaker to the common man of the Modernists.

The Inevitable Persona

When discussing the persona in sociology, I isolated a use of the persona both in literature and in social study which I labelled The Inevitable Persona. I would like now to look at that use more fully in its literary context.

The Inevitable Persona is, as I have said, that persona which springs from the inability of a mode or medium of communication not to interfere in the addressor-addressee relationship and hence not to fictionalise the message to some degree. Hofmannsthal in fact sees form itself as mask,[35] while others follow G.

T. Wright and believe that "[e]ven if an attempt is made to extract the poet from the poem, this process will not insure discovery of the person of the poet but more likely will reveal a mask of the poet's inner self reacting as an implicit voice in the poem."[36] The level of fictionalisation involved in the creation of the Inevitable Persona is outside, and prior to any attempt to write fiction. It is the fiction of all communication, even that which is in any sense "factual". But again, once the concept, based as it is on a metaphysic, is established philosophically, then any further discussion is unlikely to be fruitful for the literary critic. As Irvin Ehrenpreis wisely points out, "[t]here would be no profit in the attempt to identify it [persona] in imaginative literature if it were merely an inseparable part of language and communication; we do not praise an author for using participial phrases. Yet I believe that the persona or mask, as usually employed, has no status as art in itself, unless we admit such art to be congenital in humankind." He goes on to say that he sees the most subtle use of the concept being when it is used to describe that circumstance where the author pretends to be himself but acts a calculated role, concluding that:

> it seems that this [the inevitable persona] kind of rhetorical pose is absolutely inseparable from all language and communication. One could never reveal the whole truth about oneself, even supposing one knew it. If one could, the effect would be chaos, for to reveal all is to hide all. One cannot speak without selecting a limited number of remarks from among

> possible remarks; and it is animal instinct to choose those which suit the occasion. ... In every conversation, we misrepresent our nature. To the degree that the speaker in the Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot does not stand for Alexander Pope, no man, in a single speech can be wholly himself. If the effect produced by a speech gives a misleading or one-sided image of the speaker, the reason is that to be coherent, one must expose one side at a time."[37]

I have quoted Ehrenpreis at length because he makes a number of valuable points. Firstly, he recognises the redundancy of the Inevitable Persona in the consideration of "imaginative literature". Secondly, he advocates the use of the term persona to describe the circumstance where the author pretends to be himself but acts a calculated role. This, it seems to me, covers both of what I call the Decorum, and Impersonation uses of the term. Thirdly, he argues persuasively for the view that the art would be compromised if the artist attempted or succeeded in representing himself in his text. Lastly, in discussing the choice which the writer makes in limiting the number and nature of his remarks Ehrenpreis refers to the animal instinct which guides that choice. Whether it is achieved by animal instinct, or sophisticated choice, the Persona of Decorum (for I believe it is this that Ehrenpreis refers to) as a rhetorical pose is distinct from the Inevitable Persona of communication.

An investigation of a number of critical opinions will serve to demonstrate that the term persona is widely used to denote the phenomenon which I have labelled the Inevitable Persona. As we have already seen George T.

Wright bases his definition of the position of the writer in his work on the universal existence of a speaking voice which is at least partly fictitious and which he terms the persona. He concludes that "in all poems it is a persona, not a poet that speaks."[38] Drawing on Wallace Stevens' well-known line: "[w]e do not say ourselves like that in poems", Wright believes that if we want to "say ourselves" we must, and do, "create a formal structure whose import will be us".[39] In doing so he proposes the same solution to the writer's desire to be in his text that I advocate in this thesis as a solution for the reader who is looking for the writer in a text. Wright proposes an answer to a creative problem in the same terms as the answer I propose to the critical one. It is Ehrenpreis's unwillingness to accept the philosophical existence of the Inevitable Persona that leads him to lament the growing tendency to attribute the sentiments expressed not to the author, but to some intermediate figure.

Often a term other than persona is advocated. W.C. Booth, for instance, argues that persona is not the correct word to describe the "second self",[40] or implied author (which, as I have noted below, but using instead the term reader's author, is almost synonymous with the Inevitable Persona), yet his Index betrays him (Persona ... see also Implied author) and even in his text he finds the term seductive. "The art of constructing reliable narrators is largely that of mastering all of oneself in order to project the persona, the second self, that really belongs

in the book." [41]

Despite the degree of control Booth grants the author in fashioning the "second self" he still includes the inevitability of producing a persona in his all encompassing term Implied Author. For he admits that no author can attain the kind of objectivity of science.[42] Taken from the reader's viewpoint, no work of literature can be perceived to be completely without a subjective element which must be the product of a personality/author who, due to the medium he works in, can never be the flesh and blood author. The medium both prevents true self expression, and paradoxically insists on the perception of a subjective encoder at the same time.

In noting the universality of the inevitable persona we must ask just how useful the term is as a critical tool.

W. S. Anderson, speaking to a symposium on the nature of persona, came right to the point, when he said that to the extent that all speakers wear masks the concept of persona is superfluous but he did not attempt to distinguish the possible types of masks distinct from this universal truism.[43] Philip Pinkus seems to agree when he says that the term is misapplied when it is used to describe a speaker whose distinction from the author is not great, although how this is to be determined he does not say. [44]

As a coda it is interesting to compare what I have called the Inevitable Persona with what I have isolated as the reader's author. Essentially they are the same thing

from a different perspective. The first is the unerring result of any attempt at expression, while the second is the result of any attempt at perceiving the expressor.

The Persona Of Decorum

The second type of persona I wish to distinguish is what I will call the Persona of Decorum. I draw the term from the classical writers on the doctrine of appropriateness and decorum, and from Douglas Duncan, who, in an excellent discussion of Erasmus's use of Folly as a mouthpiece, indicates that the mouthpiece varies in order that the speech will be appropriate to the speaker, using the phrase "decorum personae" to describe these changing voices.[45]

The Persona of Decorum is that voice which is assumed (although perhaps to avoid any trace of author or intention it would be more accurate to say "is assumed by the reader to be assumed") to deliver language which is appropriate either to the subject matter or the type of person speaking. Wright tangentially points to the Persona of Decorum in observing that the different personae are partly determined by the differences between not only poets and eras, but also genres,[46] and realises that this persona will be partly dictated by the mood or tone of the piece (and the appropriateness of that tone) when he points out that to a degree we all become different people when we change our mood or tone.[47] It is possible to go a little

further and see not just the tone or the mood as the mask, but the whole form that the work takes be it satire, poem, or novel.[48] Of course the elements of a Persona of Decorum will often be found in the Persona of Impersonation, since the art of impersonation will perforce be unconvincing if it is attempted without the requisite appropriate voice. Holden Caulfield, the narrator in Catcher In The Rye, would be quite absurd with, say, an English received "voice" just as he would be less convincing without the New York patois he speaks in.

As I said at the beginning of this section, the Persona of Decorum is historically linked to the notion of decorum or appropriateness. It will be particularly common in poetry where the type of poem will dictate a particular voice without requiring (or due to its size being able to construct) a fully developed persona or character, or where no reference is made to the I-speaker, but from his language it is clear that he is of a particular vocation, social standing, educational background, or ethnic origin. This is the type of persona Kirchner is referring to when she says: "In listening to the persona of a poem we are not listening to the poet unadorned, but to a voice especially tested for a particular timbre and resonance."[49] This is the persona that M. H. Abrams refers to when he says "the romantics do not write direct political and moral commentary but (in Shorer's apt phrase for Blake) 'the politics of vision,' uttered in the persona of the inspired prophet-priest."[50] Having said this, it is likely that in

a longer work of fiction, the use of idiosyncracies of language and thought based on such influences will build into a character, a caricature, or a Persona of Impersonation. Where we can say that none of the above types of narrator has been created then it would seem that by a logic of exclusion, we would have a Persona of Decorum. (The Persona of Decorum will, of course, be in addition to any Inevitable Persona we may identify since it will be viewed by the reader as a voice that is voluntarily assumed rather than one springing from the narrator of fiction.) The question then arises "does a Persona of Decorum exist if a reader concludes from the textual evidence that there is one, yet the writer is writing, say, in New York patois, because that is how he speaks?" The answer must be yes if we are to place the same limits on the interpretation of the existence of the Persona of Decorum as we do on the existence of the reader's author.

The Persona of Decorum will predominate in poetry of the Romantic period, that is where the everyday words of everyday men are used by the poet who consciously chooses to write in such a mode without inventing a fictitious character to speak the words for him or to posture behind.

Pope's use of the vir bonus would qualify as a Persona of Decorum if we accept H. T. Greany's view that the voice Pope adopts is not a character or another narrator, but a point of view supported by appropriate attitudes.[51] The Persona of Decorum would also account for the personae which have been seen in such poems, as well as in the works

of Eliot, Pound and the Modernist poets. So when Pound wrote his Personae he in fact created voices rather than personalities and these voices were those appropriate to the poem. That, however is not how Pound himself saw it. He believed that he was striving for true self-expression and in doing so threw off complete masks of himself.[52]

The critic Brooke-Rose chooses not to use the word voice, but her point is essentially the same as mine when she says: "This, to me, is ultimately what is meant by the "Personae" of Pound; his endeavour to undergo purposefully a multiplicity of influences in order to achieve painfully, slowly, and by no means always or consistently, that perfect balance of subjective and objective, presence and absence, ghost and full-blooded flesh, past and present, fact and fiction, high seriousness and humour."[53] Each of these influences leads Pound to adopt an appropriate, decorous voice to utter his work.

The Persona Of Impersonation

The third application of the term persona that I wish to distinguish I will call The Persona of Impersonation. I coin this term to refer to that use of the term which involves a more fully developed character than either the Persona of Decorum or the Inevitable Persona. In fact commentators often apply the word persona to all first person speakers. (The term is sometimes applied, presumably by analogy with dramatis personae, to refer to

all characters created in a narrative. However in this paper I am concerned only with the word as it applies to first person narration.)

In his seminal work on the position of the poet in his poem G.T. Wright holds that a poet's personae are "the speakers of his poems" and it is clear subsequently that he intends that definition to apply even when he sees that speaker as quite distinct from the poet (a word Wright uses synonymously with the use of "reader's author" in this thesis).[54] He says for example that literature "is made up of words, composed by writers and spoken by personae. In some works the distinction between poet and speaker is obvious; in others it seems an extravagance to call attention to a distinction so thin it can hardly be said to exist."[55] For Wright, then, the amount of distinction between the speaker and the poet is not material in determining whether a persona exists. For him all speakers of literature ranging from what I have called the Inevitable Persona (where the distinction is so thin as to hardly exist) to a character who seems completely fictitious (where the distinction is obvious) are all personae. Wright sees a distinction only between speakers and non-speakers arguing that "personae, although they often partake of the richness of characterisation open to all literary personages, are constituted differently from the rest because of their role as speakers."[56] I would argue that when the distinction between the speaker and the poet/reader's author becomes obvious then the term persona

is misapplied (unless, as I have previously said the term is being used by analogy with the dramatis personae of drama) and the correct analysis is that we have a character, not the poet or the reader's author or whatever term is used to describe the apprehended motive personality behind the work of literature, and that character speaks to us in the first person. Of course there are other important problems introduced by the use of the first person that are not evident with the use of the third person in character creation. But this does not deny the point that such first person characters are of a different order from personae of authors. If the term is to possess any individual significance then it must refer to a unique narrative phenomenon which is distinct from the use of first person narration delivered through the mouth of a character who is obviously distinct from the reader's author. Such a phenomenon will of necessity be a subset of the complete set of first person narrators.

The question of whether or not such a unique narrative phenomenon can be identified, I will leave until Chapter Four. For the purposes of the current analysis, the applications of the term persona, and the question of the wisdom or productivity of any of the applications noted here must wait till then.

Wright is by no means the only critic to have used the term to refer to the fully developed character who speaks in the first person. For Kirchner the persona of Byron is manifested not only by the "I" in a poem but also in "the

deliberately invented historical or fictional character of the dramatic monologue".[57] Spector sees the eighteenth century personae such as the Connoisseur as distinct from their authors whose views are only revealed through irony, yet is quite at ease with the term persona to describe them.[58] Richmond, like Kirchner, sees the speakers of dramatic monologues, this time Browning's, as personae,[59] although he never articulates parameters for the term and it could be argued that he too is making the by now familiar analogue with the term dramatis personae. Ewald allows the term to apply to a wide range of first person speakers including, again, Browning's Fra Lippo Lippi and the other speakers of the dramatic monologues, with no suggestion that they are anything but fully fictitious, if self-revealing, characters.[60]

The term persona has clearly been used to refer to any of the impersonations who speak within a text which is constructed around an "I"-grammar. And it has often been used with little or no concern for the degree to which that speaker resembles the author (however the concept of author is perceived). The fact that the speaker, the "I", speaks to his readers seems to be deemed sufficient to qualify it for the title of persona.

Unfortunately those commentators who do use the term soundly do not give us some indication of why the term is better or more accurate than some other, such as character in the case of the Persona of Impersonation, or reader's author in the case of the Inevitable Persona, as I have

suggested here. It is just this objection which gives the anti-persona criticism of Ehrenpreis and more particularly Buckley and Wilson (1975) such credibility. Neither of these articles can establish a separate concept which is not covered by the existing, or (since persona is so well established) alternative terminology. In their extremely stimulating dialogue both Buckley and Wilson ultimately reject the use of the term because, as Wilson says early on, it is "more of a talisman than a genuine concept; an adornment to critical discussion rather than an analytic tool."[61] Later I will propose a concept which is separate and individual and to which the term persona can be constructively attached.

CONCLUSION

In current critical practice then there are at least three different applications of the critical term persona which I have isolated and termed the Inevitable Persona, the Persona of Decorum and the Persona of Impersonation. The last of these covers a wide area and often is used to denote all first person speakers by a kind of back-analogy to the origin of the term in dramatis persona. It is one segment of the Persona of Impersonation application that I will later look at more closely in an attempt to isolate a unique narrative position to which the term persona can usefully be applied.

Although I have separated the three types of persona and tended to treat them as integral entities for the purpose of this paper, I believe the truth of their application is more complex than this. Firstly the three positions are actually better viewed as points on a spectrum and the borders between them are by no means well defined. The Inevitable Persona will merge into the Persona of Decorum just as the latter will merge into the Persona of Impersonation as the amount of detailed "characterisation" increases.

Secondly, the various applications I have noted tend to be cumulative. So the Persona of Impersonation will deliver his narration in the appropriate form and voice, while the use of a medium of communication will create an Inevitable Persona.

The combination of ill-defined boundaries for the various different applications that critics have used, with the cumulative tendency of the different applications has contributed to the wide range of differing concepts the word has come to cover.

Having established to which concepts the term persona is currently applied, I wish to turn now to consider how those concepts, be they ever so wide and amorphous, are manifested in pre-romantic times.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER TWO

[1] This signal instance deserves to be cited at length.

> " It remained ... for an anonymous ... reviewer, discussing Coleridge's poetry ... to employ the term 'persona' in essentially its modern context ... While tracing the influence of Coleridge's theories, the reviewer theorized that the poet should stimulate his audience with new combinations of emotion and form, an end which is best achieved through dramatic means--whether in poetic, dramatic, or narrative form. Among these dramatic methods, the poet has recourse to contrasted emotions, conjured phantoms, philosophical charms, dialogue, and 'personae.'"

G.A. McCann, The Persona: Its Development in English Criticism, (Unpublished PhD., thesis, Ohio State University and Miami University, 1971), p. 70. All future references to this work will be in the form: McCann, (1971).

(Much of the ground involving the history of the theory of persona criticism in the early part of this chapter, and in the next, has been treated by McCann. I am indebted to his work in pointing the way for my research, and for his excellent bibliography, although, as will become apparent, I have expanded on his work and chosen to cover some areas not covered by him (a particularly important omission being coverage of pre-renaissance theories in English) while disagreeing with his conclusions in others. I have attempted to acknowledge both where I am indebted to him, and where we have reached similar conclusions. Where I believe he does go badly astray is in his confusion of the terms persona with character and even person. This seems

to lead him to the conclusion that the persona has a voice clearly distinct from the author's, and he consequently has trouble with terms like "fain" and "maske" and "vaile" which all imply the apprehender's recognition of the surface and inference of the author beneath. [See McCann pp. 1 - 2 and pp. 23 - 24 especially])

[2] William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, Literary Criticism: A Short History, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), p. 533.

[3] D.S. Savage, The Personal Principle, (London: Routledge, 1944), p. 67.

[4] To avoid the problems raised by Arthur O. Lovejoy, in his famous essay "On the Discrimination of Romanticisms", PMLA, 39 (1924), pp. 229 - 253, that the word "romanticism" has become so plural in meaning that it means different things to different people in different countries and at different times, I will confine my application of the term to that period of English poetry and its attendant conventions, themes, philosophies, styles, etc., whose centre of gravity (to use Northrop Frye's term) is between 1780 and 1830.

[5] Herbert Read, "Surrealism and the Romantic Principle," in Romanticism: Points of View, eds. Gleckner and Enscoe, second edition, (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 98. Footnoted in future as Romanticism: Points of View.

[6] G. T. Wright. The Poet in the Poem, (1960), p. 37.

[7] Herbert Read, (1970), p. 98.

[8] Mowbray Allan, T.S.Eliot's Impersonal Theory of Poetry, (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1974), p. 15.

[9] Edward E. Bostetter, The Romantic Ventriloquists, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1975), p. 4.

[10] Hoxie Neale Fairchild, "Romantic Religion", Romanticism: Points of View, p. 207.

[11] E. R. Wasserman, "The English Romantics: The Grounds of Knowledge", Romanticism: Points of View, pp. 339 - 340.

[12] Edward E. Bostetter, The Romantic Ventriloquists, p. 3.

[13] Geoffrey H. Hartman, "Romanticism and Antiself-consciousness", Romanticism: Points of View, p. 293.

[14] Northrop Frye believes that Romanticism is "Historically and generically ... akin to romance, with its effort to maintain a self-consistent idealized world without the intrusion of realism or irony." "The Drunken Boat: The Revolutionary Element in Romanticism", Romanticism: Points of View, p. 305.

[15] M. H. Abrams, "English Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age." Romanticism: Points of View, p. 323.

[16] G. T. Wright. The Poet in the Poem, (1960), p. 45 ff.

[17] ibid., p. ix.

[18] ibid., p. 2.

[19] ibid., p. 4.

[20] ibid., p. 5.

[21] ibid., p. 6.

[22] ibid., p. 6.

[23] ibid., p. 7.

[24] ibid., p. 7.

[25] ibid., p. 8.

[26] ibid., p. 8.

[27] ibid., p. 17.

[28] ibid., p. 20.

[29] ibid., p. 21.

[30] ibid., p. 22.

[31] ibid., pp. 23 - 24. See particularly pp. 72ff hereafter.

[32] ibid., p. 24.

[33] ibid., p. 27.

[34] ibid., p. 29.

[35] Hofmannsthal. Cited in Michael Hamburger, The Truth of Poetry, (1969), p. 70.

[36] James W. Carlsen, "Persona, Personality and Performance", Studies in Interpretation, ed. Doyle and Floyd, 2 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1977), p. 227.

[37] Irvin Ehrenpreis, "Personae", pp. 27 - 28.

[38] G. T. Wright, The Poet in the Poem, (1960), p. 7.

[39] ibid., p. 8.

[40] W.C. Booth, (1961,) p. 73.

[41] ibid., p. 83.

[42] ibid., p. 68.

[43] W. S. Anderson, "Symposium", p. 89.

[44] Philip Pinkus, "Symposium," p. 126.

[45] Douglas Duncan, Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 38 - 39.

[46] G. T. Wright, The Poet in the Poem, p. 4.

[47] ibid., p. 5.

[48] Norman Knox, "Symposium", p. 125, supports this view.

[49] J. Kirchner, The Function of the Persona in the Poetry of Byron, (1973), p. 4.

[50] M. H. Abrams, "Romanticism: The Spirit of the Age", Romanticism: Points of View, p. 323.

[51] H. T. Greany, "Satiric Masks: Swift and Pope", Satire Newsletter, 1 - 3 (1966), pp. 154 - 159.

[52] Pound did recognise the existence of the Inevitable Persona but saw a change in the true self immediately attendant on any utterance as the reason why the "I" of his medium was never the "I" of his true self. He said: "in the search for 'sincere self expression,' one gropes, one finds some seeming verity. One says 'I am this, or that, or the other,' and with the words scarcely uttered one ceases to be that thing. I began this search for the real in a book called Personae, casting off, as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem." Ezra Pound, Gaudier - Brzeska: A Memoir, (London: 1916), p. 98. Cited in Hamburger, Truth in Poetry, p. 130.

[53] C. Brooke-Rose, A ZBC of Ezra Pound, (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), p. 44. The quotation is from N.C. Nagy, The Poetry of Ezra Pound, (Bern: 1960), p. 111.

[54] G.T. Wright, The Poet in the Poem, p. 7.

[55] ibid., p. 22.

[56] ibid., pp. 22 - 23.

[57] J. Kirchner, The Function of the Persona in the Poetry of Byron, (1973), p. 6.

[58] R.D. Spector, "The Connoisseur: A Study of the Functions of a Persona", English Writers of the Eighteenth Century, ed. Middendorf, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1971), pp. 109 - 121.

[59] Hugh M. Richmond, "Personal Identity and Literary Personae: A Study in Historical Psychology", PMLA, 90 (1975), p. 219.

[60] W.B. Ewald, The Masks of Jonathan Swift, (1954), p. 1.

[61] Vincent Buckley and Robert Wilson, "Persona: The Empty Mask", Quadrant, 19 (November 1975), p. 81.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

THE CONCEPT OF PERSONA THROUGH HISTORY

Introduction

Chapter Two began with a discussion of the Romantic movement's contribution to the birth of the term "persona". Then the various concepts to which the term is applied today were examined. But before the term was coined the concepts to which it came to be applied already existed, and it is to these, pre-romantic, manifestations that this chapter turns now.

If the concepts to which the term "persona" have been applied can be said to have a history in any way, then the virtual invention of the poet in the poem by the Romantic movement must stand as a signal occurrence. It is almost as if the concept was created by the poets of the human soul by in fact creating poetry of the first person in which they tried to eschew the use of a fictional narrator in order to be "a man speaking to men".[1]

The forces which shaped the Romantic movement, as well as the chief characteristics of that movement, point more directly than at any other time to the necessity to have a word for the concept of "persona". On the one hand the forces shaping the Romantic movement created a milieu ripe for both the individualisation of the narrator, and the generalising of the characteristics of that narrator to

attain a universality of applicability. However, it could be argued (and G.T. Wright implies this), that each age has its "chief poetic persona"[2]; the literary equivalent of the legal "reasonable man" (that mythical individual usually found in statutes defining the criminal law, who, it is claimed, represents the thoughts and feelings of society), defined not so much by the poet as by his audience. Further it could be held that the Romantic narrator envisaged by Coleridge and Wordsworth, was merely a phase in the development that had moved slowly down the social scale from Chaucer's courtly man. This is an interesting concept in theory, but the existence of many individual exceptions, starting with the speakers of Piers Plowman and even Chaucer's speakers, would suggest it can only remain valid if applied to an implied audience rather than to the implied author or speaker.

The elements which historically led to the creation of the concept of persona exist not just in literature, but in the whole framework of intellectual thought, particularly that involving Man's view of himself. If a "persona" is a way of presenting, or even not presenting, the true self of the writer, then it follows that that writer's attitude, and the attitude of his society towards the concept of the self and its expressibility is crucial. For this reason I intend to consider not only the narrator in literature, but attitudes to the self, to personal identity, to biography and autobiography as well as the critical attitudes to persona theory. It should be borne in mind that there will

be other areas which have a bearing too; travel literature is a case in point, where the choice of narrative angle, the narrator's personal or impersonal reaction to what he sees, will be a function of the writer's views on the self. All of these examples will shed light on the concept of persona, as they all signify the way Man is able to conceive of himself, and the possibility of transmuting that self, real or imaginary, into words whether "fact or fiction".

John O. Lyons has published a most thorough treatment of the historical attitude to the self in his book The Invention of the Self, and I wish to consider his findings now, before moving on to the history of the persona itself.[3] Lyons argues that the end of the Eighteenth Century marks a significant change in man's view of himself. The two instances of Dr. Johnson's Lives of the Poets and Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson exemplify this change. For Johnson, man was the leaky vessel of the soul, while for Boswell man was the organic complex of the self. The century "began with the proper study of man being Man, it ended with the proper study of man being himself."[4]

Lyons' thesis rests on the notion that the self itself is a myth, an invention. Early man had little notion of an individual self. The concern of the earliest cave drawers was with the world around them, while man, if represented at all, was a stylistically drawn stick figure.[5] This effacing of the individual persisted in various forms until a mere two centuries ago. In biography, Lyons opines,

"even the whole truth about an individual, existed in what was stereotypic rather than in what was unique."[6] Medieval and Renaissance biography concentrated on the general rather than the typical, on the office or position, rather than the individual. It is only with Boswell that the biographer begins to concentrate on gossip, anecdote and minutiae.[7] Autobiography, too, follows the same pattern. Before "the fulcrum of the mid-eighteenth century ... personal narrative was to make one's peace with God; afterwards it was to make one's peace with himself."[8] Only Montaigne stands out as an exception, and Lyons considers Montaigne's experiences and thoughts are the material of metaphor and he himself is not the subject.[9]

Turning to travel tales, Lyons notes that concern with the self and its reaction to travel experiences replaces an interest in reason, religion and place, and introspection only becomes evident in the early nineteenth century.[10]

Even the weather (which is personal and particular to time and the observer) only becomes of interest after 1770![11]

Parallels are also noted in pornography, which moves from a depiction of the body as machine, to the personal narrative in which the heightened sensations of ecstacy are in some way self-defining.[12]

As the interest in the self and its concerns intensifies so the extent to which the self of the artist, particularly the novelist in his fiction, takes centre stage. "In the end, the author's 'self' is most clearly

seen in a refracted light, and the feeling of truth is strongest when the reader is faced with a fiction."[13]

When the modern age comes to realise that the self is, in fact, a myth, then this feeling that we are in the presence of truth when we are most in the presence of fiction, increases. A mask becomes a protection from the void that having no "self" implies.[14] We adopt a tacit assumption that we best understand authors, and ourselves, when that self "is reflected in mirrors, sensed in the shadows, haunted by the doppelganger, or glimpsed through the slits of the mask."[15]

Origins and Etymology

It would be useful to be able to restrict the application of the word "persona" by an appeal to its etymology, but that etymology contains most of the elements which cause the current state of uncertainty about the term: mask, veil, impersonation, and true self. A complete etymology of the word is unclear. The most thorough treatment yet attempted is that of Gordon W. Allport in his treatise Personality: A Psychological Interpretation,[16] in which he postulates five possible origins of the term. The first is that the Romans adopted the Greek word for mask; prosopon, presumably around the time that the Greek dramatic mask was adopted c 100 BC, although such a marked change in the form of the word makes this derivation highly unlikely. Allport sees three other possible origins as similarly unlikely.

Peri soma: A Greek word meaning "around the body".

Persum: In Etruscan and Old Latin, meaning "head" or "face".

Per se una: A Latin phrase meaning "self contained".[17]

The most likely derivation of the word is in the Latin phrase per sonare.[18] The phrase per sonare (Wright, The Poet in the Poem, prefers the form personando, sounding through, as the root form), denoted the large mouth of the mask, or perhaps the reed device inserted into it to project the voice of the actor, but, "from the very

beginning persona by a metonymic change referred not so much to the vocal aspects of the mask as to its visual properties."[19] Soon attendant abstract meanings joined the concrete ones in existence, and by the time Cicero was writing Allport is able to discern four distinct meanings of persona.

(i) As one appears to others (but not as one really is).

(ii) The part someone plays in life (e.g. philosopher).

(iii) An assemblage of personal qualities that fit a man for his work.

(iv) Distinction and dignity (as in a style of writing).

If these various meanings do not clear up the exact definition of the term, they do serve to show us just why we have such a proliferation of applications of the term today. In the meanings isolated by Allport we can see elements of both the sociological use of the term, as in (ii) and (iii) above, as well as elements of the Persona of Decorum, (iii) and (iv) above, and the Persona of Impersonation, (i) above.

Although there is no evidence of a direct Greek ancestor of the Latin "personare", the existence of the root "sonou" and the prefix "pro" makes the existence of such a word at least possible. There is no evidence of any word in Greek with a similar form meaning "a particular individual". This would tend to support the theory that

the metonymic changes occurred in Latin and not earlier. In addition it seems that Latin dramatic masks are modelled on Etruscan and not Greek models, reinforcing the suggestion that any abstract meanings would have developed during the Roman period, rather than been borrowed from earlier Greek usage. In fact, in modern English, the words mask and persona are again (or still), synonymous.

R.C. Elliott uses the Etruscan connection to support a quite different derivation claiming that "most (but not all) authorities" and "[m]ost philologists now derive persona, the Latin name for a theatrical mask, from the masked Etruscan gladiator, Phersu." [20]

Allport's etymological research presents us with a clear picture of why we have a series of meanings on a continuum ranging from those referring to the external self (incorporating notions of deceit, falseness and masking)to those referring to the internal self (personality = true nature).[21] For this reason we can have Boethius on the one hand, with his assertion that "Persona est substantia individua rationalis naturae,"[22] and Jung on the other asserting that the persona is a mask which disguises individuality.[23] So we can never be sure with our current series of meanings, whether the words dramatis persona at the top of a column of actors refer to the actors themselves or the roles they play.

When persona ceased to be a Latin word quoted in English and became an English word itself is a question which probably has no definite answer. The Oxford

Dictionary still feels constrained to call it the Latin for person but it has surely become an English word not requiring italics. Although an attempt to locate just when the term dropped its "dramatis" and existed on its own has been made, that is really only of interest to the historian of literary criticism.[24] Of more importance to the literary critic is when and where the influences which make up the concept came into play.

Earliest Elements

The two main meanings contained in the dictionary definition of the term, masking and impersonation, are both evident in the earliest echoes of the concept heard in the classical concept of inspiration; that belief that the poet is given breath by another being, and then utters that other being's words and views in his own voice. Plato espouses a closely related but narrower notion of inspiration when he refers to the poet as the voice of God.[25] The poet is seen either as possessed, inspired, or as the mouthpiece of another, more powerful seminal influence. The prototypical example is seen by Ruthven as being the "Pythoness of the Delphic oracle", who "suspended her rational faculties so that the god might speak through her."[26] The essence is that the poet is not speaking himself, and if he in turn flatters by imitation in creating for himself a speaker, it neither changes his integrity (since he has none as a speaker), nor offends the gods which inspire him. In fact the very act of creating a persona provides a parallel metaphor for the situation under which he writes. And in renaissance terms the concept of a hierarchy of metaphor from earth to heaven by which we understand the unknowable is reinforced in such use.

Plato, however, did not recognise this fact when he discussed the creation of a speaker and viewed it rather as an extension of what we would call character creation, the

only relevance to persona theory being that it is delivered in the first person. Rather than emphasise the importance of the author's voice appearing through the facade, he insisted on its being disguised by the correct and accurate imitation of the manners of the supposed speaker. He has Socrates explain that Homer, "where he is delivering a speech in character ... tries to make his manner resemble that of the person he has introduced as speaker."[27]

The emphasis here is not so much on the idiosyncracies of an individual, but of a type. As J.O. Lyons points out, this tendency to see the truth about a person in the stereotypical rather than the unique or idiosyncratic, probably persisted until the 17th century.[28] Saul Bellow has Sammler suggest that the date may be even later when he says, "Now, as everyone knows, it has only been in the last two centuries that the majority of people in civilised countries have claimed the privilege of being individuals. Formerly they were slave, peasant, labourer, even artisan, but not person."[29]

To generalise, the classical theorists were primarily concerned with capturing the type in the appropriate voice, and did not develop the notion of persona outside drama, although what they created was obviously related to our current concept.[30]

Of all the classical theorists Aristotle's third criterion for appropriate style comes closest to a notion of persona.

> Ethos ... denotes a type of person either in ... physiological differences according to age, sex, country of provenance - or in - disposition according to station in life such as rustic and cultured.[31]

The emphasis remains on the traditional concepts of the decorum and the appropriateness of the speaker's words and is not divorced from character in poetry or drama. In fact the first person narration is seen in dramatic terms as a speech rather than in terms of a fictional stance. Horace and Plato, too, linked the concept of decorum with the "dramatis persona", when they saw it in terms of oratory and rhetoric, believing that the speaker is just an actor, and, with a predominance of the spoken word over the written, not a purely literary creation. But it should not be overlooked that Horace does move from a discussion of style and the typical voice, to the subject of poetic speech in Ars Poetica, and as C.O. Brink astutely observes, the "talk is still about people - only this time the characters are individuals not types; the PERSONAE appearing in poetry".[32] Although I would not go so far as to say these are personae in any other way than dramatis personae existing outside formal drama, they are still closer to character than archetype and, as such, closer to the possibility of the creation of an individual rather than a representative in fiction. Horace does provide us with an early argument for the necessity of appropriateness or decorum, when he argues that "whether a god is speaking or a hero" authors should "ascribe to each person whatever is appropriate to him."[33] This appropriateness applies to

all speakers of course and not specifically first person narration.

Longinus came much closer to the modern view of persona in emphasing the first person. "There is ... the case in which a writer, when relating something about a person, suddenly breaks off and converts himself into that selfsame person."[34] But as G.A. McCann correctly notes, Longinus sees it as a rhetorical device, as " 'the practice' represents 'a kind of outburst of passion', and results when a crisis in the plot 'constrains' the poet to shift from one person to another" rather than as a sustained literary device.[35]

Virgil's use of the lofty style for The Aeneid, the middle style for the Georgics, and the low style for the Bucolics was a direct application of decorum in the speaker to the production of poetry.

It is interesting to note that in all classical discussion it is never questioned that the author can speak in propria persona. Whether in fact this is due to a belief in the possibility of self expression, or the reverse (that all literature or oratory is of necesssity never delivered in propria persona), is difficult to ascertain.

The last important classical theorist I will examine who discussed issues relevant to "persona" theory is Quintilian. In his De Institutione Oratoria he used the notion of Ethos established by Aristotle but used it in a purely oral (and legal), sense.[36] He advised the orator,

building onto Aristotelian and Ciceronian theory as he did so, that Ethos is "the demonstration of character, especially the character of the speaker," and is a powerful tool in convincing a judge, for "[i]f he can show himself to be a good man, he is helping support his argument".[37] Cicero on the other hand had pointed out that "ethos is not so much a matter of the moral earnestness or uncorruptibility of the speaker as of affability or manners."[38] Form not content.

So despite the emphasis placed on the goodness of a good man showing through, artifice is advocated in order to obtain the appropriate degree of "affability or manners". When, in the courts, it became normal for an advocate not to be a principal in the case, but a spokesman, then the level of artifice naturally increased, and the fiction that the speaker spoke for one of the principals was born.

It is evident however, that in classical theory, the concept of persona exists in forms which are essentially oral, and the role of the speaker is that of an actor rather than a pose which can be seen through. Of course the practice may well have been in advance of the theory at this point. There is no evidence to suggest that Chaucer, when delivering his work orally, was the first to create an ironic ambiguity between the speaker as he appears physically to his audience, and the speaker as he appears in the spoken word. Naturally such a conception would be outside of, and contrary to, the interests of the litigant, and would only be expected in literature and fiction. Yet

the element of decorum or appropriateness which dictates that the speaker should use language which fits the subject matter, lies very close to the orator's methods and has been a significant formative influence on the development of a concept of persona, as we have seen.

It is in satire that the use of the pose or mask or stance, whatever the term applied, is most evident in both Greek and Latin writers. But the indirection of satire, like that of irony, makes the location of a persona an almost impossibly complex task. The use of a form which involves literally saying what is not, will perforce require the speaker to speak, if not in alter persona, then at least in terms that he does not believe on the literal level. So in Aesop, Lucian, the Homeric parodies and above all in the Satires of Horace, we see the "fictional" speakers speaking in words not the author's.[39] But it seems most likely that this is due much more to a belief in the concept of decorum than an attempt to create a persona in any of the other applications of the term discussed in Chapter Two. The concept of decorum or appropriateness dictated that the speech must suit the subject spoken (or the form used - in this it is inextricably tied to genre theory); a belief that was to develop more strongly still in the Renaissance. If the concept of decorum is accepted, then satyrs speak Satires (despite the etymologically different origins of the two words), and shepherds speak Pastorals, since the appropriate speech will lead to the appropriate speaker. The use of such a speaker implies a

message delivered indirectly by the author to his audience through the medium of the appropriate style or voice of that genre. It is in this indirection and implication, rather than bald statement of the author's views, that the concept of persona has its origins.

In an era when genre is a strictly delineated concept, and views on literature are held in a more doctrinaire way, the author's opinion can be reasonably clear even with the use of indirection. However, when a more individual style (Horace's for instance), or a blurring of the strict boundaries of genre or received doctrine appears, then it is easy to understand how audience interest moves (or is forced to move), away from the message (which may be ambiguous), to the medium (which may be fresh and new, yet ultimately less resistant to critical interpretation). As the message becomes more complex or less doctrinaire, the difficulty in understanding the "true message" of the author increases, since understanding this message is a function of understanding the speaker who, in turn, is less clearly defined in terms of doctrine or Genre. On the general level, if this argument is accepted, the use of, and interest in, personae can be viewed as a response to the breakdown of strict genre distinctions and clearly defined codes of ethics or religion. A breakdown paralleled by the breakdown in the individual's view of himself as an instance of a generality, held by the Aristotelians who "regarded the individual human being as a mere instance of a generality - of the uniform nature of

man; and sought to restore Man's individual character into a combination, varying from case to case, of universal qualities, or 'elements of form' possessed by him in common with other individuals" as George Misch put it.[40]

The Earliest English Writers

The constraints upon life and art in the Old English period should, by analogy with the classical writers, provide us with a use of the persona based on generic and stylistic considerations rather than on the development of an individualistic narrator. Generally the analogy is sound, although the genre has changed from the pastorals and satires of ancient Athens or Rome to (at least in the extant work) an emphasis on heroic and elegiac tales, usually of deeds in battle. In the heroic poem "Widsith" for example, the narrator introduces the words of Widsith who then appears to speak the tale in his own words.

> His telling began thus:
> "Of the master-rulers the most part have been known to me and I say that any leader, any lord whosoever, must live right".[41]

Despite the personal opinion expressed here, the body of the work is really just a travelogue of places visited and people met.

> among Verns I was, among Vikings, and among Vendals,
> among Gepids I was, among Wends and among Gefflegs.[42]

However, in the narrator's final summation we have an interesting reference to the role of the writer which, although hardly important enough to be considered seminal in the creation of a concept of persona in English (and taken in association with other poems of the same period, "Deor" for instance, seems almost formulaic), does indicate

the early existence of the author speaking directly to his audience. Of course the strong oral nature of all such early poetry must mitigate against any great emphasis on this as a literary device unless we are willing to suspend all extra-textual considerations in criticising the poem. The narrator's summation reads:

> The makar's wierd is to be a wanderer:
> the poets of mankind go through the many countries,
> speak their needs, say their thanks.
> Always they meet with someone, in the south lands or the north,
> who understands their art, an open-handed man
> who would not have his name fail among the guard
> nor rest from an earl's deeds before the end cuts off light and life together.
> Lasting honour shall be his,
> a name that shall never die beneath the heavens.[43]

Although the passage, almost because it is so restrained, is tinged strongly with a sense of the personal interest of the narrator in the lot of the "makar", we are left uncertain about just who the "makar" is. Widsith? Himself? Are the two one and the same person? Free as we are of biographical data we also lack any internal markers to help us come to any conclusions about the narrator.

As I indicated before, "Deor" too has a first person narrator who also ends with a reference to the patronage necessary for a poet, especially the transience of patronage and the suffering imposed by its loss. Whether we see these statements as traditional conceits or heart-felt appeals, they remain little more than shadowy ancestors to the modern concepts to which the term persona is applied.[44]

In the elegies "The Wanderer" and "The Seafarer", the tale is more personal; that of the lonely individual far from home. In "The Seafarer", the emphasis is on the writer's role in the account.

> The tale I frame shall be found to tally:
> the history is of myself.[45]

Again he is suffering from what could almost be defined as the Zeitgeist: the individual suffering alone in a cold universe that symbolises the lack of warm human friendship around him. The only escape from the cold is in the miserable alternatives of death through illness, age or the "edge of vengeance".[46] In this transitory existence, fame that lives on is seen as the only form of immortality and this can be provided by the after-speakers: the poets and minstrels. Obviously the poet was in the poem long before Wright wrote of Eliot, Pound and Yeats, and the device existed in the Seafarer's (or the Seafarer's poet's) mind as the only provider of permanence to counterbalance the loss both in, and of, this life.

Medieval Developments

In the Middle English period, the persona critic's interest turns again to drama, the origin of the concept. In secular writing, with the exception of Chaucer (and of course in Chaucer's work to a large degree) the I-narrator is confined almost exclusively to the dream-vision. The narrator of "Piers Plowman", for instance, falls asleep in the Malvern hills, saying:

> Thanne gan I to meten * a merueilouse sweuene
> That I was in a wildernesse * wist I neuer where[47]

His personality thereafter is of little importance as a means of indirection in comparison with the major source of indirection, allegory.[48] If the narrator of Pier's tale merely reports his own dream, the narrator of the Owl and the Nightingale represents himself as the accidental eavesdropper on the dialogue between the two birds, but little else. It is as if the immediacy of oral presentation dictated that the speaker exist in the poem, but not in any crucial or ambiguous way. However, the use of the dream-vision does allow the writer some of the flexibility provided by a persona. The man in his dream can see things in an illogical, chaotic, or unacknowledged way (due to the nature of the world of dreams) without materially affecting the audience's sense of the reliability of the conscious narrator. A kind of other self is brought into existence, which can be influenced by

the narrator's experiences before he fell asleep. So, for instance, the narrator of Piers Plowman sees a vision of the London he has left for a walk in the Malvern hills and the narrator of Pearl is reminded of his lost daughter by a pearl. As E.V. Gordon has pointed out, the vision provided the "authority" so important to the medieval writer if he was to achieve literary credibility, while performing a moral and didactic function for the sleeper.[49] Within this framework marvel and fantasy could still exist, while the tenets of medieval writing were not broken, since those same marvels and fantasies were linked by person, place and time to the real world. The widespread use of the dream-vision in extant medieval manuscripts gives an indication of the universal attraction that some form of indirection in the narrative voice has for writers and their audiences.

The position of the "I" narrator in medieval religious lyrics is much less an individual concept and more a collective one. Rosemary Woolf notes that "medieval authors intended only to show the 'I' speaker examining his conscience for the sins which he shares with everyone." The author is effaced, but at the same time it is he who is being watched. Not for any individual or distinctive cast of mind, but for "a way of thought and a particular emotional bias that was not peculiar to one man". Both the emotional control expressed, and the sincerity with which it is expressed, spring from "the measure of what reason had shown to be appropriate", on the one hand, and through

the "faithful transmission of well-tried religious devotion ... in a particular propriety of style to subject-matter" on the other.[50] Decorous demands are more important than a poet's individual bias. In this way even signed works remain genuinely anonymous.[51].

Chaucer stands apart from the other medieval writers in his use of the persona. No other writer managed to achieve the same degree of sophistication in his use of the narrator, despite his adherence in his early poems to the dream-vision genre. There has been so much critical speculation on the nature and function of the Chaucerian persona, that an exhaustive analysis would be too ambitious for the current work to attempt. I shall confine any analysis of the persona markers in Chaucer to Chapter Six, but for the sake of historical perspective, it should be stated that in the employment of an elusive, often ingenuous and inconsistent mask, he was able to create a narrative mask which was designed, not to obscure or deceive, but to be penetrated. It is often a signal characteristic of such Einzelganger as Chaucer that they do not fit easily into a development, be it of technique or thought.

The marriage between the concept of persona and drama has always been, as we have seen, a close one. This close relationship continued in the medieval period. The Quem Quaeritis trope, so important in the development of medieval drama, also contributed on a more general level to a notion of "impersonation". Most significantly, this

impersonation was an embryonic form of acting. In the Quem Quaeritis this involved two boy singers as angels and three male singers as the three Marys.[52] But the use of impersonation in religious tropes, enacting as they do events not strictly fictional, and involving as they do impersonators not totally indifferent to the impersonated character, led to a measure of identification between the actor and his role. This identification was reinforced by the strength of his religious belief, and could border on possession, a possession which echoed the possession those classical theorists who insisted on the vatic nature of the poetic act saw. Of course, as these tropes became more dramatic, and less closely associated with the religious occasion that provided their origin, the more the impersonators became actors and the close sense of personal identity was weakened. Amalarius, the Bishop of Metz, interpreted the liturgies in a dramatic way to give immediacy to religious worship, but as D. Bevington points out in his excellent account of the drama of the time, a belief in the literal truth of Christ's real presence in the bread and wine of the Eucharist meant that, "[i]n this profoundly important sense, the service of the Church remained a ritual rather than a 'fiction' or mimetic presentation."[53] Before such dramatic liturgy became liturgical drama it passed through a phase where the impersonators were not so much actors, but more personae for the literal Christ, so that the "visit to the Sepulchre was not intended as a mere imitation of an action but as a

demonstration of the living reality of Christ's resurrection."[54] While both Bevington and O.B. Hardison emphasise the action was ritualistic, they both, in their descriptions of the sighs, groans, silences and bodily contortions of the participants, suggest the inspired, almost vatic disposition of the participants. Hardison, however, puts great emphasis on the movement from ceremony to representation of the Quem Quaeritis,[55] a movement which would lessen the vatic role of the actors and instigate a more creative role. It is likely that as the classical and medieval dramas developed along parallel lines emanating from religious rite, so the classical and medieval influences on the concept of persona contain many parallels. In the medieval case, however, the concept seems to have been still-born, since there is no real evidence that the concept as it arose in the churches influenced literary technique. On the other hand it is possible that it may have contributed to the medieval view of the self and its presentation in fiction in a more general way.

The Renaissance

If there is no (extant) theoretical writing on the concept of persona in earlier English writing, the situation changes little during the Renaissance. There are numerous examples of related uses of the narrator in literature of the time, as well as frequent subsequent theoretical speculation, but neither of these provides hard evidence of a contemporary awareness of the concept, nor of the problems facing the writer who employs it. This void is largely explained by the powerful influence of Humanist thought, which created a bias away from literary criticism concerned with aesthetic and formal considerations, to moral and didactic ones. "Literature was valued not so much for its aesthetic and artistic qualities as for its practical uses, for its influence on character, its ability to train a man for his part in active life, or again, as providing models of expression."[56] This is not to say that no interest was shown in the form of literary expression, but it was seen only as serving the function of better expressing wisdom and knowledge.

In poetry the classical notions of inspiration and possession of the poet were maintained by Bruni and Pico della Mirandola, but in England little further examination of the way these notions relate to the narrator was attempted.[57] Ascham discusses Chaucer, but only values his moral teaching and his ability to reveal "the inward disposition of the mind,"[58] and any discussion of how

this is achieved with or without a narrator is absent. It may be that this failure to mention the persona was a result of the universality of the view that J.E. Spingarn argues persuasively was the basis of all Renaissance criticism: that all poetry should express possibility not actuality.[59] The view is that of Aristotle in Poetics 9 and, applied to the concept of the expressibility of the self in art, it would suggest that the persona of expression is universal and unavoidable, since the expression of the actual poet on the page in all his idiosyncracies would be actuality (if historically accurate), and therefore not poetry.

Such an extreme view is difficult to maintain, but the basic argument is in line with the modern concept that the fictive nature of fiction indicates that it is the fictive element that defines literature, and not factual or extra-textual connections however close to the work these may seem. If Spingarn is right, then when Milton uses a pastoral speaker who "Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill",[60] his contemporary critic would need no suspension of disbelief to believe that such a poem could be written by such a shepherd. His disbelief is, as it were, permanently suspended when it comes to expecting a poet to speak in his own voice.

Whatever the truth, there was no mention of the technique of persona even in the poetic manuals of the time. Gascoigne discusses the elements of verse composition, but he refers only in the most oblique terms

to the narrator's role. Little more is contributed by Harvey, Nashe, William, Webbe, or "E.K.". However Puttenham, in his Arte of English Poesie does touch on ground that by now will be familiar as peripheral to the concept of persona. He discusses decorum in style (a priest should be sad and sober, for instance), but his notions of how a character should be presented lead to stereotyping, and the main body of his work is again on versification. The closest Puttenham comes to bearing on the use of personae is in his treatment of style, where, in emphasising the necessity for decorum and appropriateness to genre, he delineates the need for "histories and tragedies," to be written in "the high style, comedies and love-poetry in the middle style, pastoral poetry the low style."[61] Although still a long way from consideration of the voice of the first person narrator, the styles he refers to are the voice and language of an imagined speaker, since, as "a poem is speech there must exist a speaker, ... to say the words. ... For every composer of a literary work of art knows, whether he recognises his knowledge or not, that words are always spoken in the first person, that words ... always represent someone talking." [62]

Ben Jonson discusssed the traditional high, low and middle styles of writing (Discoveries pp. 120 - 121) but did so in order to point out the difficulties of using each. He also, as Helen Cooper observes, "criticized both Sidney and Guarini because they 'kept not decorum, in

making Sheperds Speak as well as they [themselves] could.' "[63] In his use of masks, Jonson's practice was well ahead of his contemporaries. In his sonnets Shakespeare applied the voice of literary convention rather than an individuated mask, or even, according to Paul Zweig, the voice of the poet expressing his own singular experiences.[64] Douglas Duncan sees Jonson as standing in the Lucianic tradition, and when Lucian's use of a multitude of masks, as "Lucian" in A True History and in Nigrinus, as "Lycinus", the Syrian, or "Frankness" elsewhere is compared especially with Jonson's later poetry, the point is well made.[65] However, Jonson's masks are much more flexible, employing as he does "several, contradictory masks [which] shift in and out of focus like a kaleidoscope; poetic patriarch, royal lackey, ethereal singer, fat buffoon, forsaken defender of traditional values, and sick old man."[66] As Jonson, in a grotesque imitation of himself, "Laden with Bellie," and weighing, "twenty Stone within two pound,"[67] strides through the work he writes, one commentator opines that he is "too personal and self regarding."[68] The possible existence of a persona marker inherent in the presentation of a narrator's biographical facts, here used to achieve self-abasement through physical detail (which Jonson may well have adapted from Chaucer), is overlooked in such statements. It is seen as truly personal detail and treated as the author's genuine disgust in his own body. The possibility that it is a fictional device is not

considered by Jonson's contemporaries. Perhaps such a view is symptomatic of the age, for even Jonson's own expressed opinion was on the side of the "impossibility of any man's being the good poet without first being a good man." Such a view does tend to reinforce the link between the poet and his work, but surely even if Jonson is right in his contention, that does not imply that all narrators must be faithful reflections of the man. Even a modern critic like Lemly sees the speakers as "self-portraits" and argues that they "suggest a conscious striving towards an unattainable ideal" rather than a sophisticated literary device.[69] Edmund Spenser did discuss the uses Virgil and Theocritus made of shepherds and goatherders to speak their poems, but in his own Argument to the October Eclogues he does see a difference between Cuddie, the narrator, who is a "perfect pattern of a Poete" and the Author of the work[70]; the first sounding remarkably like a recognition of the Persona of Decorum and the second a recognition of the possible distinction between the narrator and the author.

The Augustan View

Despite Chaucer's and possibly Jonson's use of the narrator in practice, the concepts to which the term persona has been applied were not well developed in theory before the Neo-classical period. As we have seen, the concept existed as a concomitant to genre or as literary style based on either the theory of decorum, or of inspiration. In fact even as recently as 1969, a critic speaking of Wallace Steven's work, could opine that he "made little use of personae. Language itself served him as a mask; the mask of style."[71] Of course before the theory was fully developed the genius of the writer could create a manifestation of the concepts of persona long before they formally existed in theory. The powerful imagination of such writers allowed them to produce a concept in their art and for which the intellectual milieu did not provide a term until the Romantic period.

The Augustan age saw the widespread use of these various concepts due largely to the rise of satire and the novel. As we have seen, the persona lends itself especially well to the indirection of satire, and the use of a narrator who is himself a butt of the satire had a long tradition stretching back to Juvenal and Horace. Combine this with the traditional emphasis on decorum and appropriateness of style and a ready made concept of persona of decorum can be seen to exist. However, the nature of poetic satire and poetry generally is such that

any "I" narrator rarely has the ability or the space to assume all the trappings of a character or an author, and must remain a shadowy figure at best. As a new genre the novel could break new ground in the area of narratological technique, but the long tradition of poetry prescribed and prescribes certain types of narrative which formalise and therefore depersonalise the narrator. So the love lyric is a presentation, not of a man in love, but of a man singing of love.[72] The poet is not a full man, but a singer, and so does not appear (until perhaps the Romantic period), "participating in all the variety of life ... with private interests and private business of his own."[73]

The singer in a lyric is manifestly either a persona of decorum or an inevitable persona but not the real author under such an analysis.

The Earl of Shaftesbury believed all poets should be so detached. He expressed approval of the poet who, "instead of giving himself those dictating and masterly airs of wisdom makes hardly any figure at all, and is scarce discoverable in his poem," while recognising that the hero, "whose name they [the poems] carried both in their body and front ... was in himself a perfect character, yet ... so veiled and in a cloud that ... he seemed often to be very different from what he really was."[74]

The rise of the novel gave the creator of a speaker a new genre without poetry's strong conventions, and consequently lacking poetry's formality. At the same time

the novel set out in a way poetry never had, to present physical reality (not to be confused with truth). Characters were formed in all their detail for their individualism rather than as representatives of mankind. Combine this trend with the nature of the earliest novels, make one such character the narrator, and the groundwork for the confusion between a "real" author and his "real" creations is established. The "personal" is paramount in the earliest novels and pre-novels. For example in the many "personal" travel tales, the personal pre-occupation of the letters in Richardson's Pamela, the picaresque, and the spiritual biography of Bunyan (which is also a travel tale to some degree). The use of letters is particularly important, since, once the fiction of a letter has been removed, the strength of the pronoun "I" will endow the narrator with all the trappings of a "real" human being. It then only requires a blurring of the distinction between the author and his first person narrator - a merging of the authorial voice with the fictive narrator's voice - to create a persona as it is defined in Chapter Two.

As well as the new novel genre, the old satiric persona was still in evidence, and both were given added impetus by the changes which occurred in poetry in the century following the Restoration. During this time poetry lost what James Sutherland believes "may be comprehensively labelled the supernatural," and he cites Richard Hurd's assessment of the change: "'What we have gotten by this revolution ... is a great deal of good sense. What we have

lost, is a world of fine fabling.'"[75] Whether poetry's loss of its "fine fabling" ingredient was a result or a cause of the rise of the novel is unclear, and irrelevant to the fact that the novel usurped the fabulatory role.

Poetic and prose satire largely escaped the purge of the imagination imposed by Hobbes and Locke and their emphasis on the rational and scientific. When a persona was introduced, an effect similar to the use of the dream-vision is achieved; the writer can write of the irrational, the fantastic, or the wildly imaginative by employing the satiric narrator in place of the dreamer (or the dreaming self). What Gulliver sees on his travels is more irrational than anything Piers Plowman or Chaucer's dreamers see. But even so, the distinction is not as total as this would suggest, since, although Swift himself does not fall asleep, but invents another character to experience the fantastic, Gulliver himself does fall asleep in order to be pinioned by the Lilliputians and allow for the transition from the lifelike, the probable, to the fantastic.

Even in poetic satire, the Renaissance notion of the conformity of style and subject matter remained, and any persona-related narrators that occur in Pope's "Satires And Epistles Of Horace Imitated" owe more to Horace, Juvenal and the convention of decorum than to any new sensibility. It is those poems which do not "belong to a genre with a classical prototype," "Hudibras", "Macflecknoe", "Absalom And Achitophel", "The Rape Of The Lock", "The Dunciad",

that the originality of the writers in employing new forms of narration showed through.[76] Similarly it is in the works which do not conform to a genre with a single classical prototype that the new intellectual milieu throws up the persona/narrator: The Tatler, The Spectator, The Tale Of The Tub and the various pamphlets provide illustrations.

Whether in fact these narrators qualify as personae by my own definition will become clear in Chapters 4 - 8. Certainly they qualify as personae under one of the applications of the term, either as Personae of Decorum or Inevitable Personae. More importantly they represent a state of mind which allows for the type of narrator later to be called persona: a first person narrator who claims to be the author but is in some way fictitious.[77] That all of the above are satires indicates that the idea that, to be decorous, a satire should be spoken by a Satyr, still had considerable influence on the appearance of personae.

Other than a strict adherence to the notion of decorum, there was no reason why, once a concept of persona in prose satire had been established, the concept should not be readily available for non-satiric prose, or poetry. With the latter however, the strong element of the dramatic still tended to leave the speakers in poetry in line with the dramatis personae of the stage, rather than with the emergent personae of prose. This final break with drama can only occur when poetry becomes sufficiently free of the restraints of metre and language and truly becomes the

everyday language of ordinary people. Then, theoretically, the realism that made the novel such a useful vehicle for personae will exist in poetry. How far it is possible to implement this ideal is debatable. Wordsworth for instance tried to transcribe his self in all its individualism (including his use of language) onto the page, yet in writing "The Prelude" he, by, "selection, evaluation, and belief in exemplary experiences ... "[78] distorted the transcription in such a way, that the narrator is as much a fiction as any fictitious character. The experiences may be Wordworth's, but the narrator is not him in any real sense. Instead, we have an accidental (or from the perceiver's viewpoint, an inevitable) persona; the persona created by a belief that the self which is transcribed onto the page is an accurate and faithful representation of the flesh and blood poet and his experiences.

Only a conscious recognition of the inherently fictional nature of fiction, and therefore a recognition of the unsuitability of fiction for such an attempt, will prevent these "failures" of intent from occurring. (Whether or not the writer can construct an artifact in words which implies himself, or is expressive of him, rather than an expression of himself <u>per se</u> is another issue altogether.) Wordsworth wanted to understand himself better and thought that if he could "fix 'the wavering balance' of his mind and show himself how his own story leads to his ideal of himself as the Poet, he will have a Godly understanding of his own being."[79] But this naive

belief, linked with a lack of perception into the nature of personae, left him with a non-self just as Whitman was in writing "Leaves Of Grass". In fact, the parallel with Whitman is very close indeed. Both wrote poetic autobiography in an attempt to put "themselves" on paper and both failed in the attempt, creating in both cases a fictional self. Perhaps in the final analysis poetic autobiography should be viewed as a contradiction in terms. Unless, that is, the notion of the inevitable, omnipresent, persona is accepted.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER THREE

[1] The preface to Lyrical Ballads, reproduced in Lyrical Ballads: A Selection of Critical Essays, eds. Alun R. Jones and William Tydeman, (London: Macmillan, 1972), p. 37.

[2] G.T. Wright, The Poet in the Poem, (1960), pp. 34 - 35.

[3] J.O. Lyons, The Invention of the Self, (1978).

[4] ibid., pp. 6 - 7.

[5] ibid., pp. 28 - 29.

[6] ibid., p. 40.

[7] ibid., pp. 51 - 52.

[8] ibid., p. 55.

[9] ibid., p. 67.

[10] ibid., pp. 121 - 124 passim.

[11] ibid., pp. 161 - 162.

[12] ibid., see especially pp. 177, 184 and 187.

[13] ibid., p. 200.

[14] ibid., pp. 222 - 223.

[15] ibid., p. 15.

[16] Gordon W. Allport, Personality: A Psychological Interpretation, (New York: Henry Holt, 1937). Hereafter referred to as Allport, (1937) followed by the page number of the reference. Allport draws extensively on H. Rheinfelder, "Das Wort 'Persona'", Zsch. f. roman. Philol., (1928), Beiheft 77, p. 22ff, Adolf Trendelenburg, "Zur Geschichte des Wortes Person", Kantstudien, (1908), 13, p.

4ff, and F. Max Muller, Biographies of Words, (1888), p. 32f. James W. Carlsen "Persona, Personality and Performance", Studies in Interpetation, eds. Doyle and Floyd, 2 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1977), pp. 221 - 223, adds little to Allport's account, while drawing on him liberally and often without acknowledgement.

[17] Allport, (1937), p. 26.

[18] Both Allport and the Oxford Dictionary express mild reservations about the unusual, but not unknown shift of the "o" from short to long. Allport, (1937), p. 26, note 7.

[19] Allport, (1937), p. 26.

[20] Robert C. Elliott, The Literary Persona, (1982), p. 20. Elliott's book only came to hand in the last months of this thesis preparation. As a result references to his book are only included where they contribute to the argument specifically, or extended it naturally. In fact Elliott acknowledges that his enterprise "must seem anachronisitic" from a theoretical point of view (xi) since his work does not engage with the "newest New Criticism". Yet even in his own terms Elliott adds little to the debate since his last four chapters are largely reprints of earlier articles. In Chapters One and Two he attempts a history of the word persona and the use of persona criticism, adding little of significance to Allport other than that cited here. Only in his two chapters "Sincerity" and "The Question of Truth", does he contribute importantly to the debate on the use of the first person singular

pronoun and the problems of truth and sincerity. Unfortunately his cover of the concept of the self in history is sketchy and makes no mention of Lyons' important book.

The whole impression is of an important conception not quite brought to full fruition - a failure perhaps caused by Elliott's sad and sudden death in 1981.

[21] Allport, (1937), p. 29.

[22] Allport, (1937), p. 30.

[23] Allport, (1937), p. 40

[24] McCann, p. 70.

[25] Plato, Ion, Translated by B. Jowett, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871), p. 237. Socrates tells Ion that he speaks Homer so well because, "there is a divinity moving you ... The Muse, who first gives to men inspiration herself; and from these inspired persons a chain of other persons is suspended who take the inspiration from them."

[26] K.K.Ruthven, Critical Assumptions, (1979), p. 56.

[27] The Republic of Plato, trans. F.M. Cornford, (Oxford: 1941), p. 79. Cited in, Barbara Hardy, Tellers and Listeners: The Narrative Imagination, (University of London: Athlone Press, 1975), p. xii.

[28] John O. Lyons, The Invention of the Self, (1978), p. 40.

[29] Saul Bellow, Mr Sammler's Planet, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1970), p. 228.

[30] G.T. Wright makes an interesting and relevant point when he says, "the mask of drama ... is clearly

intended to reveal more than it hides, to affirm more than it obscures. In these forms the face is not important, but the stylised mask symbolises, stands for, something - an attitude, a view of life, one aspect of the universe - which is of too great a significance for the expressiveness of any human face to be able to convey." Wright, The Poet in the Poem, p. 9. In many ways the concept of the persona discussed here preserves the dramatic criterion Wright mentions.

[31] Aristotle, Rhetoric, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, 3, p. 7.

[32] C.O. Brink, Horace on Poetry, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 195.

[33] McCann, (1971), p. 12. citing Horace, Ars Poetica, trans. J. H. and S. C. Smith, Part 10.

[34] Longinus, On the Sublime, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), Chapter 27, p. 113.

[35] McCann, (1971), p. 13.

[36] Of course the generally held belief that in classical times even written works read in private were read aloud reinforces the spoken element of literature, and links fiction and poetry with drama and oratory much more intimately than is the case today. In that case, the concept of a persona would seem more natural and universally applicable, since whatever is read is uttered through someone - even the self - as the persona.

[37] G. Kennedy, Quintilian, (New York: Twayne, 1969), p. 74.

[38] ibid., p. 75.

[39] See R.C. Elliot, (1982), pp. 15 - 16, for discussion of the counter view.

[40] George Misch, A History of Autobiography in Antiquity, trans. E.W. Dicks, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1950), p. 591.

[41] "Widsith", 11, pp. 9 - 12, trans. Michael Alexander in, The Earliest English Poems, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 38.

[42] ibid., p. 39, lines 59 - 90.

[43] ibid., p. 42, lines 134 - 143.

[44] In fact Norman E. Eliason is of the opinion that both narrators (and they are the only two narrators in extant Old English works who are "scop"), are fictional narrators. See "Two Old English Scop Poems", PMLA, 81 (1966), pp. 185 - 192, for Eliason's useful account in which he also attempts to counter both the traditional view of "Widsith" as fragmentary and interpolatory, and the traditional interest in the so-called factual elements of the poems.

[45] The Seafarer, trans. Michael Alexander, (1966), p. 74.

[46] ibid., p.76, line 171.

[47] Langland, Piers The Plowman, ed. W.W. Skeat, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 1. Derek Pearsall in Piers Plowman by William Langland, (Berkeley and Los

Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), p. 28, correctly points out that the "I" of the poem should not be identified with Langland, since "his experiences and attitudes may at many points be the poet's but, as the dreamer, he is first of all, always, a literary fiction."

[48] Isidore of Seville used the term "alieniloquium"; other speech, for allegory. See Etymylogiae, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911).

[49] Pearl, ed. E.V. Gordon, 14 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953).

[50] Rosemary Woolf, The English Religious Lyric in the Middle Ages, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 5 - 9.

[51] ibid., p. 13.

[52] V.M. Roberts, On Stage: A History of Theatre, (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 78.

[53] D. Bevington, Medieval Drama, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), p. 5.

[54] ibid.

[55] O.B. Hardison, Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1965), pp. 230 - 231.

[56] J.W.H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: the Renascence, (London: Methuen, 1947), p. 15.

[57] ibid., p. 24.

[58] Ascham's letter to J. Astley (155) Works (iii) p. 6. Cited in Atkins, (1947), Chapter 2.

[59] J.E. Spingarn, A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), p. 28.

[60] Milton's "Lycidas", ed. Scott Elledge, (London: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 4, line 24.

[61] Atkins, (1947), p. 173.

[62] G.T. Wright, The Poet in the Poem, p. 6.

[63] Helen Cooper, Pastoral: Medieval into Renaissance, (Ipswich: Brewer, 1977), p. 131. See pages 127 - 143 for a detailed discussion of Latin and English uses of rude elements in decorum.

[64] Paul Zweig, The History Of Self-Love, A Study In Subversive Individualism, (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 143. Cited in J.O. Lyons, p. 198.

[65] For a full treatment of the question see: D. Duncan, Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

[66] John Lemly, "Masks And Self-Portraits In Jonson's Late Poetry", ELH, 44 (1977), p. 248.

[67] "To My Lady Covell". Cited in Lemly, (1977), p. 249.

[68] "Epistle to Volpone" (1607) ch. 31. In Ben Jonson: Three Comedies, ed. Michael Jamieson, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 42. Jonson goes on to see the poet's function as being one who should "inform young men to all good disciplines, inflame grown men to all good virtues, keep old men in their best and supreme state ...".

[69] Lemly, (1977), p. 263.

[70] McCann, (1971), p. 21. citing Edmund Spenser, The Shepherds Calender, eds. Greenlaw, Osgood, Rodelford, and Heffner, The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, 7 (Baltimore, 1932-57), p. 95.

[71] Michael Hamburger, The Truth of Poetry, (1969), p. 122.

[72] G.T. Wright, (1961), p. 31.

[73] ibid., p. 31.

[74] A.A. Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, "Soliloquy: or Advice to an Author", ed. Scott Elledge, Eighteenth Century Critical Essays, 1 Part 1, Section 3, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), pp. 178 - 179, also substantially cited in McCann, (1971), p. 38.

[75] James Sutherland, A Preface to Eighteenth Century Poetry, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 2.

[76] Ian Jack, Augustan Satire 1660 - 1750, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), p. 5.

[77] W.B. Ewald, in The Masks of Jonathon Swift, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954), p. 9, prefers "totally fictitious", which would make a first person narrator a persona as soon as he is the supposed author - presumably if he mentions the fact that he is writing that would be enough. This seems too all-embracing to me and I will prefer a definition which excludes the totally fictitious since it seems possible that such a character can exist as a supposed author and still be so unlike the author or possess values so opposed to those of the reader's author

as to fail to qualify for the identification with the self necessary for the term persona to be used.

[78] R.J. Onorato, The Character of the Poet: Wordsworth in the Prelude, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), p. 6.

[79] ibid.

C H A P T E R F O U R

PERCEIVING THE PERSONA

How can we know the dancer from the dance?

W.B. Yeats, "Among School Children".

Which Narrator Is The Persona?

An abiding difficulty in defining just what a persona is rests in the fact that it exists on a spectrum, that is, the spectrum of narration which ranges from the author speaking (within the restrictions already discussed) in his own voice, to the author speaking wholly through the mouth of a character. Hence a persona is only really definable relationally in terms of character or of author.

If the concept of persona is viewed in terms of the concept of character or of author then the persona appears to be suspended between the two, as either a character who exhibits certain similarities with the author, or as an author who is somehow more fictional than actual. Kirchner for example sees a persona as a surrogate self of the author frozen in a particular stance.[1] For Wright, the writer in creating a persona assumes an attitude he does not share. In The Nature of Narrative Scholes and Kellogg see the "histor" (their term for narrator as inquirer stretching from Herodotus and Thucydides and including Marlow) as neither a character in narrative nor exactly the author himself, but a persona, a projection of the author's empirical virtues.[2] Carlsen treats the persona as synonymous with a "fictitious speaker reacting to events and situations within the prescribed poetic environment", and who, when he is apprehended, is a separate personality from that of the poet.[3] Unfortunately Carlsen does not tell us how we apprehend this separation.

However the concept of persona is viewed by these commentators, it is finally seen as somehow between the concepts of author and character as they are traditionally accepted. Rather than look at the traditional attempts to define a persona in terms of its similarity or dissimilarity with the author or his characters, this thesis proposes instead to establish the existence of a narratological stance which is logically distinct from any other and to which the term persona rightly applies. In order to do this it will first be necessary to determine whether under a truth conditional account of fiction there is a unique narrative stance in relation to the factuality or fictiveness of a tale which differs from the positions of reader's authors and fictional narrators, to which the term persona can be applied. If so how can this knowledge help us ascertain the nature of the markers which lead us to postulate the existence of a persona?

If such a unique stance can be found, then it will be possible to address the question of markers to its identification.

Truth Conditions In Narrative

Any attempt to establish the parameters of the concept of persona is a move towards establishing meaning in the literature to which the concept is applied. Meaning, in turn, is established by reference to truth-conditions. "In logic", according to Allwood, Anderson and Dahl "the meaning of a sentence is equated with its truth-conditions". Just as it is possible to "characterise an important part of the meaning of a sentence by formulating the conditions the world must meet for the sentence to be true (in other words, we say in what worlds the sentence is true)",[4] so can we learn a great deal about the narratological layout of a text by establishing the relationship between the narrator and the narration. That is, we establish for whom the story is fiction and for whom fact.

It seems to be a universal truth that narrators in fiction tell their own stories as fact, and indeed those parts of a narration which contain the narrator himself would be (logically) absurd were this not so. But the facts asserted by a narrator are not necessarily facts of the actual world, but are facts in another, possible world which may or may not be the world of the narrator. When people in the actual world claim that a proposition is true, they mean it is true in the actual world. However when a person in a non-actual world, a literary text for instance, makes such an assertion he is usually attributing

truth to that proposition in his own world.[5] The truth of any statement is, then, contingent upon the world in which the statement is made.

Only on rare occasions do we encounter a narrator who admits to the fiction of the story he is telling. David Lewis cites the example of Pierre Menard retelling Cervantes' Don Quixote.[6] Henry James held that such an admission was artistically a fault and condemned Anthony Trollope for conceding "that he and his trusting friend are only 'making believe'. He admits that the events ... have not really happened, and that we can give the narrative any turn the reader may like best. Such a betrayal of a sacred office seems to me ... a terrible crime. ... It implies that the novelist is less occupied in looking for the truth than the historian, and in so doing it deprives him at a stroke of all his standing room."[7]

In attempting to account for the narratology of fiction by recourse to the truth conditions of the fiction I am expanding the work of Lewis and Parsons in particular who have attempted to account for the semantics of fiction by this methodology.[8] For a comprehensive analysis of truth conditions and constraints on fiction see Kuiper and Small (1983)[9] which overlaps extensively with the material presented here, and with the illustrative Chapter Eight.

Lewis maintains that we must allow for two distinct worlds when we consider a fiction. The distinction he makes is between the world in which the fiction is told as

fiction, and the world in which the fiction is told as fact. Once the fiction has been established as fictional, and the limits of the "text" are set (assuming that that is possible) then all statements made by a narrator, even if they purport to be made by the flesh and blood author in the actual world, primarily inhabit, and rely for their truth conditions, on the fictional second world, and are therefore fiction in our world. Of course not all commentators would agree. Genette for instance believes that "M. de Renancourt and Crusoe are author narrators, and as such they are at the same narrative level as their public - that is, as you and me",[10] while literary criticism is rife with statements about the author speaking directly to the reader, even in regard to such a notorious mask adopter as Swift. Under a truth conditional analysis the fact that Crusoe treats his story as known fact, while the readers treat the story as fiction, prevents Crusoe from existing at an absolutely identical narrative level to his readers.

If we accept Lewis's distinction then it follows that when we read

> It was about the beginning of September, 1664, that I among the rest of my neighbours, heard, in ordinary discourse, that the plague was again returned to Holland.[11]

or when we read

> Before describing the extraordinary events which took place ... in our town, I find it necessary, since I am not a skilled writer, to go back a little and begin

> with certain biographical details concerning our talented and greatly esteemed Stepan Trofimovich Verkhovensky.[12]

we must treat what the narrator tells us as known fact in his world. Similarly when we read:

> This book is largely concerned with Hobbits, and from its pages a reader may discover much of their character and a little of their history. Further information will also be found in the selection from the Red Book of Westmarch that has already been published, under the title of The Hobbit.[13]

we treat the existence of Hobbits, and the existence of a book called The Hobbit as known fact in the narrator's world. This despite any knowledge we may have that there is in the actual world a book by Tolkien entitled The Hobbit. This means that the book is simultaneously, known fact in the narrator's world, known fact in the actual world, and known fiction in the actual world. Such a multifaceted or paradoxical existence must remain under a truth conditional account of fiction. And as long as there are authors, they will attempt to obfuscate the distinction between the actual world and the world of their books in order to reinforce the realist interpretation which readers may be prepared to put on books. Tolkien attempts this by juxtaposing a concept which a reader may be sceptical of (the Hobbit) with something which, if the reader does not know, he can at least verify by research (a book called The Hobbit). That he achieves this by using an identical pair of words, "the Hobbit", is doubly effective, and the subtle advertisement for his earlier book is worked seamlessly

into the text.

The words which the author, be it Defoe, Dostoyevsky or Tolkien, writes, and the words which the narrator appears to write will be identical.[14] But to whom are the words fact and to whom fiction? As readers we may share the knowledge of Defoe in recognising that the book A Journal of the Plague Year is fiction in the actual world, or we may, as some readers have, share the view of the narrator and treat the events related as facts in the actual world. The question is really one of which world we share, that of the author, or that of the narrator. Put in these terms it is easy to explain so-called misreadings of books by commentators who have shared the narrator's view. The only way such a misreading can be avoided is either in a (prior) investigation as to the fictiveness or otherwise of the tale, or by the intratextual undercutting of the narrator's position as author of the story. The narrator of the Journal provides no such evidence, nor are we aware of any undue constraints on the reality of the telling which would lead us to extrapolate to a reader's author as a guiding force. Clearly these problems should only arise when the fictiveness of the text is in question. Any reader who allows the narrator to slip out of the world of the fiction and become an inhabitant of the actual world is making an error of perception, and his conclusions about the text will be distorted as a consequence.

Truth Conditions of the Persona

We have established that in a fiction the narrator narrates his story (and crucially those details pertaining to himself) as known fact. The reader's author on the other hand is aware of the fictive nature of the tale he creates. If a third relationship with the truth conditions of the tale can be located which occupies the ground between these two, to which we can apply the term persona then we can say that the persona is a distinguishable type of narrator, distinguishable that is from the author and from the first person narrator.

The truth conditions under which a persona would operate would require that it deliver the tale as both fact and fiction, or more precisely narrate the tale as fiction while appearing to relate it as known fact. Likewise the persona would have to treat those elements of the tale which relate to its own existence as fact while in some way revealing the true, that is fictional, nature of these elements in the view of the reader's author. The way a reader perceives this duality in the role of the persona towards the material he narrates will be the persona markers.

In the dialogue between Wilson and Buckley,[15] already mentioned, the Australian critic acknowledges this dual, stereoptic, effect. "I should think that 'co-presence' provides the minimal condition for any meaningful use of 'persona' ".[16] Wilson ultimately moves

from this view, to hold that persona in character (i.e. a character with personae as we have in Robertson Davies' The Manticore and Fifth Business; a psychoanalytic concept of persona similar to Rawson's view of the speakers in Swift all being part of the real Swift) is the only acceptable literary use of "persona". That is the "persona of a character" rather than the "character of a persona".[17]

Such a move from authorial to character personae shifts the discussion beyond the realms of this thesis, dealing as it does only with authorial personae. Wilson's rejection of the term "persona" in authorial depiction is disappointing, because he is one of the few commentators to recognise the importance of that duality of certain narrators to which I would apply the term persona. One example he provides is excellent. A statue by Ernest Christophe in the Tuileries depicts a woman holding a mask in front of her face, the mask impassive, the face in ecstacy. Wilson comments that "if either the face or the mask were absent, then the relationship would be destroyed, and the point entirely lost."[18] Wilson's rejection of the use of "persona" to describe such instances stems mainly from what he feels is the term's inaccurate and over use, rather than from its inapplicability here.

I would argue then that a narratological stance distinct from both the author and the first person narrator as character can be established under a truth conditional account of fiction. This narratological stance I will call the persona.

As a working definition, a persona exists when the speaker is a first person narrator who appears to be treated as fact in the text but is revealed by the perception of certain signs (persona markers) to be a fictional representation of the reader's author. It will follow from this that the persona will treat the narration it delivers as fact while revealing that, since it is a mask for the reader's author, it is aware of the fictional nature of that narration.

Cruttwell talks of a narrator who approaches the definition I have given. He calls it the "making of the self which pretends not to be, but encourages the reader to think it is" the real person of the writer.[19] This does distinguish between what we as readers are encouraged to believe is so and what we are also indirectly informed is so. The pretence Cruttwell talks of is of course a pretence; the self is not the real person of the writer.

Parenthetically, it is important to separate the persona from that type of narrator who treats himself as fact while delivering a tale he admits is fiction. The case of Trollope's supposed narrator to which James took such exception is a case in point. The fact of his own existence is fact in the world of the fiction but fiction in the actual world of the reader. Unless it is revealed as a fictional mask of the reader's author it will not be a persona.

If the narrator who attempts to speak to his readers is always a fictional narrator and not true in the actual

world, then it follows that we the readers in the actual world cannot be the readers so addressed. When Gulliver or the narrator of Tom Jones speaks to the "gentle reader" then for the truth conditions to hold that gentle reader must inhabit the same world as the narrator. He will thus hear the story told as known fact, even if the extent of that known fact is only the fact of the narrator's existence.

Once this is established it becomes much easier to realise the distinction of the narrator from the persona since statements addressed to "you" no longer apply to us in the actual world but to a fictional listener or reader. It is this fictional reader who is the implied reader of the text and is as much the product of the text as the narrator is. Gerald Prince makes just this point in his article "Introduction to the Study of the Narratee"[20]:

> All narration ... presupposes not only (at least) one narrator but also (at least) one narratee, the narratee being someone whom the narrator addresses. In a fiction-narration -- a tale, an epic, a novel -- the narrator is a fictive creation as is his narratee.[21]

How then does the persona stand in relation to narratees and readers in the actual world? The persona will, as an inhabitant of the fictional world, address fictional narratees, but in revealing himself as a fictional mask of the reader's author he will also address the real reader. This he can never do in the text by simply addressing "the reader" as that reader only exists

in the text and not in the actual world.

The Reader

If, as I have suggested, we accept that those indicators of the existence of a persona, as well as the concept of an author as he is manifested in a text, are both constituted by a reader, then it is of central importance to establish the credentials of that reader. As I have pointed out earlier, the extreme view would be to allow that each reader can define his own author of a text. This would lead to a situation where we would have as many reader's authors as we have readers. Similarly we would have as many and as varied a number of sets of persona markers as we would have reader's authors. While this may be one way to approach reader-response criticism, it will be more useful when dealing with markers if we have one stable perceiving entity to do our reading for us. Such an entity will be a construct of course.

It follows that this perceiving entity cannot be defined by each individual text, as the various attempts to create "implied readers"[22] have done, since valid as this approach undoubtedly is, it does not provide a single stable reader. Similarly the "mock reader" of Walker Gibson (1950), and the "Model Reader" of Umberto Eco will be inappropriate. All of these conceptions rely on a view of the reader in terms of the text as it is fashioned by the author.[23] It would not be too extreme to say that these readers are intended by the author through the text.

At the other extreme, should the critical activity (in

this case as it locates those indicators we will call persona markers) become so individual and subjective that it becomes a private moment in the existence of a particular reader recorded as an autobiographical instance then that too would not suffice.[24]

Superreaders And Informed Readers

What we require is a sort of idealised reader along the lines suggested by Riffaterre and Fish. Michael Riffaterre in his article "Criteria for Style Analysis" defines a construct he calls the Average Reader (AR).[25] This he sees as the combination of virtually all readers and their reading experience and concludes that the significant stylistic devices of a text can be ascertained by noting which features are discussed by those readers while ignoring their aesthetic judgement made about these features. The fact that they select those devices as worthy of comment makes them significant per se. While acknowledging the limitation of using the reactions of virtually all readers as a means to the location of stylistic devices, he argues that it is normally only at the interpretative stage that they diverge into such a multitude of differing reactions that those reactions become uninterpretable.[26] Further he holds that any AR at any time will have a linguistic competence covering only a short span of time in the history of the language. In his later work "Describing Poetic Structures: Two

Approaches to Baudelaire's Les Chats"[27] he coins the term "superreader" to replace AR and defines him more closely. The superreader of Les Chats is a composite of

1) To a limited extent Baudelaire, for his correction to line eight, and for placing the sonnet in the ensemble of the collection.
2) Gautier, who paraphrased the sonnet in the preface to the third edition.
3) Laforgue, for echoes of the sonnet Sanglot de la Terre, "La Premiere Nuit".
4) The translations of Fowlie, Freedman and Duke.
5) As many critics as he could find.
6) Textbooks, footnotes etc.
7) Other informants such as his students.

Riffaterre's aim is to discover the structure of the sonnet, and any point that "holds up" the superreader is tentatively a component of the structure.[28] I wish to return to how these devices relate to persona markers later.

Another version of the ideal reader is constructed by Stanley Fish despite his seeming disapproval of this and other methods of treating the reader.

> [W]hen the possibility of a reader-centred criticism seems threatened by the variability of readers, that threat will be countered either by denying the variability (Stephen Booth, Michael Riffaterre) or by controlling it (Wolfgang Iser, Louise Rosenblatt) or by embracing it and making it into a principle of value (David Bleich, Walter Slatoff).[29]

Fish's reader is, he admits, an ideal or idealised reader, somewhat like Milton's "fit" reader, and he calls this

reader the informed reader. The characteristics of Fish's informed reader are:

(i) He must be a competent speaker of the language out of which the text is built.

(ii) He must be in full possession of the semantic knowledge that a mature listener brings to his task of comprehension including the knowledge (that is, the experience, both as a producer and comprehender) of lexical sets, collation probabilities, idioms, professional and other dialects, and so on.

(iii) He must have Literary Competence; that is he must be sufficiently experienced as a reader to have internalised the properties of literary discourses, from figures of speech to whole genres.[30]

Having said that, he allows that there are a "number of informed readers" with a matrix of political, cultural and literary determinants.[31]

Riffaterre's superreader is, of course, specific to the text of Les Chats and an approach to another Baudelaire sonnet, or a sonnet by another writer altogether, would yield a different superreader. What Riffaterre creates is however capable of generalisation into "the complete experience of the text and the experiences of all those books and individuals who have a bearing on the text, by this critic (Riffaterre)." The superreader will be defined solely by the individual, while the informants available to

other critics are not necessarily included. Even allowing for the size of the net Riffaterre casts in order to gather a diverse set of reactions and information on the text, the superreader of W.C. Booth or Geoffrey Hartman or Ronald Reagan could differ substantially, and produce in the same case before us an idiosyncratic view of the narrator and his relationship to the story he tells.

In spite of his assertion that it is people like Riffaterre who deny the variability of the reader, Fish creates a much less variable construct in his informed reader. His first criterion that the reader must be a competent speaker of the language - in other words possess what linguists call Linguistic Competence - is soundly based. Only an intimate and perhaps even a native association with the encoding tongue will allow for the understanding of the full range of connotations, rhythms, and associations as well as dissociations immanent in any linguistic system.

His second criterion expands on the notion of linguistic competence. The question of literary competence is a little more contentious and is the most important facet of the reader as a means of decoding the structure of a text. The notion of literary competence has come into existence by analogy with linguistic competence. The justification for this is the contention that, like language, literature is a system of signs. As such, Tzvetan Todorov asserts that it has "a code analogous to other systems such as the natural tongue, the basic arts,

mythologies, dreams, and so forth. Further, and here literature is distinguished from the other arts, it is constructed with the help of a prior structure, that is, language; it is therefore a second-degree signifying system, in other words a connotative system."[32] If we treat those persona markers that a reader will perceive in a text as a series of signs, then it will be necessary for that reader to have assimilated the system of conventions, expectations and structures which combine to form literature. To attempt to understand the literary text with a mind which is a sort of literary tabula rasa with a knowledge of only the first degree signifying system would clearly be inappropriate. The ability to convert the linguistic structures into the necessary literary structures through an awareness of a literature and its conventions is what constitutes literary competence.[33]

The Reader And The Need For Cultural Knowledge

Although an intimate acquaintance with a language inevitably brings with it a knowledge of the considerable cultural "freight" which words carry, little is made of this by the theorists of reader-response criticism. Yet no language is without its cultural imprint. As convincing as Riffaterre is that associations do not work from outside history to text, but the other way round,[34] it is difficult to accept that in the case of A Modest Proposal we can allow a reader the right to disapprove of the

proposer's scheme (or rather posit a reader's author who disapproves) only if there are intratextual indications of that disapproval. An appeal to the universal abhorrence of cannibalism in the cultural freight attached to the linguistic description of that activity in the language of the encoding would create a similar disapproval. This is distinct from an assertion that the objection is universal to all men and all languages since it is quite possible that the language of the race which practices, has practiced, or knows nothing of cannibilism would not be similarly freighted. This in turn of course brings into doubt the accuracy of any analysis on a translated work. At least the analyses in the different languages should be treated as distinct, and conclusions should not be automatically transferable from one encoding language to another.

Cultural Knowledge As A Marker

Of course in the Proposal there are other indicators of the way to treat the narrator's proposal which do not require a context of the reader's moral or cultural values inherent in the language with which he is familiar. This is not so in the Defoe pamphlet, The Shortest Way With Dissenters, which is so often discussed in harness with Swift's. The complete lack of indicators to the true stance of the narrator in relation to his material in the Shortest Way has been used as evidence to support the view

that all indicators of "meaning" in a text must be intratextual, and that without some such indication in Defoe's art we are doomed, unless we commit the biographical fallacy and include an awareness of Defoe's own position as a dissenter, to "misread" the pamphlet - a mistake, it is argued, we never make with Swift, where the intratextual clues lead us to the "right" conclusion about the narrator vis-a-vis his material.[35] That is, in the absence of intratextual markers, the reader's author which a reader constructs from the Shortest Way will be synonymous with the speaker. Logically this argument also implies that were it not for the existence of these elements in Swift's Proposal we would be forced to the same conclusion. However, it is possible to find in the two works another distinction which is contextual and not related to intratextual indicators at all. This is in the cultural and moral attitude toward on the one hand cannibilism, and on the other the hanging of dissenters. Hanging is an acceptable (by which I mean it is historically and culturally a part of the environment of the encoding language) means of disposing of law breakers. Cannibilism would be quite unacceptable however, and had that been part of the treatment advocated for the dissenters then a very clear indication of the speaker's divergence from the reader's author would be given. This shows that some contextual evidence is required in the perception of persona markers. Our idealised reader will require then a cultural and moral conscience of the

broadest kind springing from his linguistic competence.

As in any analysis involving such a generalisation there will be areas of uncertainty. For instance it would be simple to say that genocide is redolent with moral condemnation yet with the examples of the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis, the massacres in Kampuchea and numerous other modern instances, it becomes doubtful whether we can see the approval of one such event by a speaker as proof of his divergence from the views of the reader's author. The only escape from this dilemma is to see all such views as the work of a deranged or pathological reader's author, but then we abdicate any attempt to ascertain any differentiation between narrators, since in the final analysis the most disjointed multi-voiced or incoherent tale could be explicable in terms of some kind of psychologically disordered intellect. Suffice to say that most readers, and certainly the reader postulated here, will assume a sane reader's author who shares the cultural and moral values (as we have defined them above) of the encoding language.

Briefly then, the reader postulated for the purposes of this thesis will have the following characteristics.

(i) Linguistic Competence at the level of a native speaker.

(ii) Literary competence or the means to achieve such competence through research.

Research may be needed in the case of a text which may be temporally distant and hence

show real variations in the encoding language from the current knowledge of the encoding language.

(iii) Sanity, and an attendant belief in the sanity of the encoder as it is accepted in the language of encoding. (It is possible to see sanity as a value shared by the author, the reader, and the text and hence as an element of literary competence.)

With these characteristics the reader will provide the contextual elements of the markers which lead him to postulate that the narrator in a text is a persona.

Now that the nature of the reader whom we allow to perceive and decode the second-degree system of signs we call literature has been established, we are able to turn to the three areas of application of the term persona and assess the nature of the markers which will indicate the existence of each, bearing in mind the truth-conditionally distinguishable narratological stance I have identified as the persona. We will then be in a position to decide which, if any, of these areas of application are true personae under our definition. To do this I will treat in turn the three applications of the term established earlier - the Inevitable Persona, the Persona of Decorum and the Persona of Impersonation.

The Inevitable Persona

In the case of the application which I have styled the Inevitable Persona, it is self evident that the only "marker" which is required is the existence of a medium of communication. Yet the term has been applied largely to the area of author intentions, that is, that an author inevitably creates a persona when he writes. The reader in turn will apprehend this persona to be the author, the motivating force behind the text. From the reader's point of view the Inevitable Persona will be coterminous with the reader's author as he is defined here. Where no other personality is perceived in a text then the views perceived must be seen as the property of the reader's author. These views in combination with the evidence inherent in the structure of the text will build to form a picture of the author. This is saying little more than that the whole experience of the text will be the evidence by which the reader will construct an author. In fact it is axiomatic that there is nothing in a text which does <u>not</u> act as information toward the construction of a reader's author. If we forget for a moment our reservations about the term "implied author", W.C. Booth makes just this point when he defines that author as "the creating person who is implied by the totality of a given work ... [e]very stroke implies, inescapably, a kind of person who would choose to make that precise stroke,"[36] His view is supported by Robert Scholes who argues that "structure, ... by its very

shapeliness, asserts the authority of the shaper, the fabulator behind the fable".[37] However with the introduction of some form of indirection, be it the use of irony, the mock-heroic genre, a persona (in which category the Inevitable Persona is now not included) beyond the indirection inherent in communication, certain avenues by which we approach the author are blocked. We still have the general evidence of the text as structure but the view of the reader's author's opinion is necessarily obscured. The way in which these covert facts are constructed will be revealed as a by-product of the investigation of persona markers which follows; markers which reveal a mask concealing and at the same time revealing the guiding and creating force "behind".

The inevitable persona is to be seen as a persona of a different order, and prior to the personae of decorum and impersonation. To be able to say "yes, we have a persona", we need only say "yes, we have a text". As a result the application of the term persona to the concept of "the inevitable persona" is critically unproductive. In terms of the truth conditional narratological stance we have isolated as a persona, the "inevitable persona" does not qualify as a persona, and the term is clearly not applicable here.

The Persona Of Decorum

The indications the reader receives that a persona is adopted only to fulfill the decorous demands of the text's genre or speaker will be by their nature elusive. In the minimal set of properties that a narrator will have in a poem such as Wordsworth's "Lucy" poems for example it will be difficult to isolate confidently any attribute which will seem to be in any way divergent from the apprehended reader's author who is the motive force behind the text. Wright uses the word persona in discussing the lyric persona of the jongleur and points out that a poem, formed as it is from words, tends to define the speaker as well as the activity, but that the definition is of a kind of conduct rather than a kind of man.[38] He sees the speaker so defined as a lover, mourner or patriot, but essentially the speakers are not men but are decorous "voices", and judges that the poet's participation in the persona increases as the persona becomes more individual (that is more towards becoming a persona of impersonation). What he seems to be arguing for is a persona which is decorous, yet he never attempts to locate just how this voice can be seen as different from that of the poet (or reader's author in our terminology, since Wright postulates a poet who is always a persona of the true author). Philip Pinkus believes that the term persona is in fact misapplied when the distinction between the speaker and the author is not great,[39] while Edward Rosenheim jr. believes that we have

a persona where disjointure (between the speaker and the author) is noted but not to the extent of being blatantly evident.[40] Although the latter is a little vague, it clearly touches upon the condition that this thesis finds so necessary to the existence of a persona of impersonation. Taken together with Pinkus's view, it is arguable that where the author is virtually indistinguishable from the speaker, things are not clarified by the use of the term persona or Decorous Style. A more useful description would be Decorous Voice although there are good reasons to prefer no separate category at all and treat the subject text as delivered in a stylistically appropriate way by the inevitable persona. (Although of course the decorous persona will be the inevitable persona under some circumstances. It is as if the supposed distinctions disappear as they are approached.)

When a speaker speaks in a manner which is seen as appropriate to his position in life, or the subject matter of his speech, or the form of his medium, then such a speaker will, in the absence of any evidence to undercut his integrity, be seen as either a character who narrates the tale or poem in the first person, or as indistinguishable from the reader's author.

Paradoxically, if there is such a thing as a "persona of decorum" in the sense that persona has been defined in a truth conditional sense, then it will only be indicated by evidence which seems inappropriate to the speaker or his medium.[41] This view can be maintained, but it limits the

applicability of the term to a very narrow area indeed. For example, in Wordsworth's poetry, it is the language which is not the everyday language of men which, as it were, "gives the poet away" behind the simple mask. Take for example:

> A slumber did my spirit seal;
> I had no human fears:
> She seemed a thing that could not feel
> The touch of earthly years.
>
> No motion has she now, no force;
> She neither hears nor sees;
> Rolled round in earth's diurnal course,
> With rocks, and stones, and trees.[42]

The word "diurnal" serves to elevate the tone of the language where the alternative "daily" would only emphasise the mundane. Yet "daily" is what we would expect given the "simple" language of the poem. With the raising of the tone comes the introduction of a universal and metaphysical level, which we take to be the poet's meaning. Even if we were unaware of the singularly more sophisticated nature of the word choice at this point, the word is highlighted as the only trisyllabic word in an almost monosyllabic poem. The coincidence of the polysyllabic with the metaphysical provides a stylistic device (in the words of Riffaterre) which holds the reader up, and in turn belies the level of sophistication of the reader's author, a sophistication not apparent in the linguistic choice elsewhere in the poem. As a result the reader is forced to redefine his view of the reader's author, and postulate a voice distinct from it which speaks the poem. Similarly in Milton's "Lycidas" it

is the inappropriateness of the speech to the supposed speaker, an "uncouth swain" with "fingers rude" which causes us to look elsewhere for the real creator of these lines.

It is important to distinguish this inappropriateness from the general inappropriateness which is prior to determining the narrator's nature and is inseparable from the activity of writing. For example it is extremely unlikely that the narrator of Donne's poem "The Sun Rising" would actually compose those lines at daybreak after a night with his lover, or that a horse would have the necessary linguistic competence to narrate Anna Sewell's Black Beauty. For the latter to be a persona, another self behind the horse would be required, and this self would need to be indicated by an awareness by the narrator of the logical absurdity of his position as storyteller. Otherwise Black Beauty is a character who narrates the tale in the first person. As a general rule the coexistence of the writing process and the activity of the subject of the writing will almost always be insupportable in the first person present tense.

Undoubtedly the persona of decorum does exist, but the application of the term persona to narrators who are either character or reader's author (and in the case of many works these in turn will be indistinguishable but for their inhabiting different worlds under a truth conditional examination), should be resisted. It is one thing to say that the speaker is decorous or appropriate to his subject

matter or the form of the medium. It is quite a different thing to show how he diverges from the reader's author in any specific way. The simple existence of appropriateness is not sufficient to prove that an author's nature, attributes and opinions differ from those of the speaker. As we saw earlier Pope assumes the voice of the vir bonus in the Epistle to the Earl of Burlington, of Taste, in order to validate the views expressed and to make the objects of his satire appear more foolish.[43] This is true, yet to call this a persona seems to be stretching the point, since there is nothing to indicate that the narrator is not just what he seems - a sane, reasonable man, schooled in the classics, architecture, and history. He may well diverge from the historical Pope, but history is the only source of that sort of evidence. There is no evidence of such a man as Pope really was behind the narrator. In fact, the reader's author seems to share the views of the narrator in all the reconstructions of Pope that are attempted from the text. Maynard Mack identifies three such reconstructions, the vir bonus, the ingenu, and the heroic public defender, in Pope's verse satires, all of which in his opinion are dramatic and not biographical.[44]

Statements such as these, concerning Pope's reasons for creating "personae" bring us to the crux of the matter. Criticism which has used the term persona has seen it by and large in terms of the creative and not the critical act; as it applies to the writer and not the perceiver. The act of perceiving a mask cannot be divorced

from the knowledge of an author behind the mask, yet in many of the discussions of what I have called Persona of Decorum there is no evidence given to support a distinction between the narrating voice and the author, and the only conclusion must be that the distinctions are seen between the speaker and facts known by the commentator extra-textually. There are some notable exceptions though. Ehrenpreis[45] does say that any meaning in the concept of persona or masking must be located in the difference between appearance and reality and that an implication that a genuine person is there but chooses not to reveal himself is necessary. He sees the most subtle expression of the concept when the author pretends to be himself but acts a calculated role. Although Ehrenpreis holds a narrow view of the acceptable applications of the term, he does again view the problem from the perspective of the author and not the perceiver. Talbot Wilson in a discussion of the narrator of Paradise Lost manages to avoid a similar trap, and talks only of the narrator who "may be identified through his direct statements to the reader"[46] and whose "voice ... is the controlling force within the poem, all incidents and descriptions are filtered through his mind."[47] Wilson joins in the condemnation of E.M.W. Tillyard's view that at times Milton intrudes and speaks directly to the reader, seeing these moments as evidence, along with figures which depict the Muse, with which to establish the identity of the narrator.[48] Although Wilson does not reject the

possibility of a reader being spoken to directly on principle, his reliance on a view of the narrator gleaned strictly from textual evidence alone is refreshing.

The Persona Of Impersonation

By an application of a truth conditional analysis of narration it has become clear that the application of the term persona to the Inevitable Persona and the Persona of Decorum is, with the exception of a marginal example in the latter case, unenlightening. In the case of the Inevitable Persona the universal existence of that "persona" in all expression makes it a function of expression per se and as such superfluous. The Persona of Decorum being basically a function of style and voice is simply a misnomer and is in any case indistinguishable from the reader's author except where the style or voice becomes inappropriate.

The third application of the term which I have isolated and styled the Persona of Impersonation does conform with the truth conditional account of narration given at the beginning of this chapter. Because of the reservations I expressed in using the term persona in this regard it is only, however, to a small number of the narrators who come under the umbrella term Persona of Impersonation that I would apply the term persona.

These narrators can be briefly described as being self-revealing masks of the author. The Persona of Impersonation is, then, the only true persona, the only narrative stance which is unique and distinguishable from the author speaking as himself, or a totally fictitious narrator. All future references to persona will pertain to this type of narrator unless specifically stated

otherwise. The signs that a reader perceives that will lead him to postulate the existence of a persona I will divide into three categories.

Firstly there will be those indicators which suggest indirection in its broadest possible sense. These will include irony, satire, and generally the literariness of the work.

Secondly there are those indicators which achieve indirection at the semantic level by displacing, distorting or creating meaning - metaphor and metonymy, ambivalence, contradiction and nonsense, rhyme and symmetry and so on. In fact all those devices which threaten the literary representation of reality (mimesis).[49] Rubin has noted that the elaborate wordplay in Joyce's Ulysses and A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man "are devices ... for making and keeping us aware, at all points in both novels, of the presence of the author. For ... these two novels ... are told to us by an author who has a talent for puns."[50] As such they direct the reader's attention to the fact of the narrator. Although Riffaterre applies these indicators in an attempt to argue for the unity, the truth of coherence, of poetry, they clearly also apply to prose fiction as well, since the significance of a fiction is equally reliant on the dislocation of the natural relationship between word and object. These indicators (or perhaps more accurately, instances) of indirection are however common to all literary discourse and will only apply to persona-location within specific texts. There

will be no persona-specific incidents of semantic indirection, which will be discussed in isolation from the text, or about which meaningful generalisations can be made.

Thirdly, there will be those indicators which position the narrator and his views "between" the reader's author, and narrator as character. I use the word "between" with some reservation, but it is the most accurate way to conceive of the relationship and a useful shorthand way of referring to it. Essentially these markers will operate as a series of oppositions, pointing on the one hand to the authorial nature of the persona and on the other to his role as character in the story. As a result the persona will appear to be poised between the two.

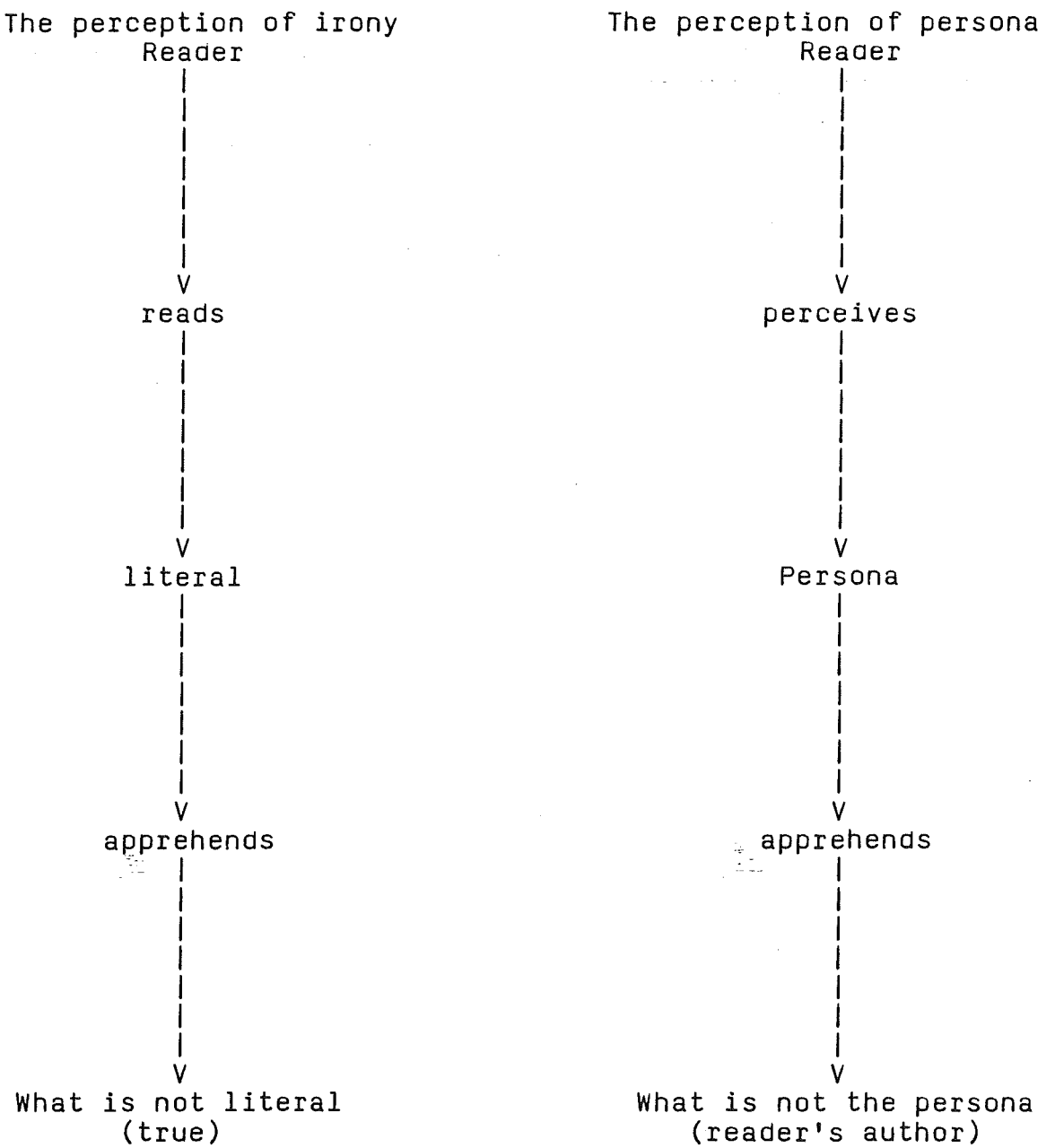
In the first of these categories I included the general indirection of irony as a marker to the postulation of a persona. I believe an investigation of the way readers perceive irony is a useful prior investigation to the way readers perceive a persona, and I will look at that briefly now before moving on to look at persona markers themselves. For the ironist, like the creator of a persona, is negatively free, as Kierkegaard puts it. "The actuality which shall give him context is not, hence he is free from the restraint in which the actuality binds him but negatively free and as such hovering, because there is nothing which binds him,".[51]

The Perception Of Irony

When a reader concludes that he is faced with an ironical utterance, he must somehow construct his own notion of the true views of the expressor of that utterance. Given that irony is a method of saying what is literally not so in the speaker's mind, the only positive view we can attribute to the speaker must, to a large extent, be an inference we draw from the surface ironical statement. (Although there are many types of irony,[52] I am confining myself here to that general notion of irony as it was defined by Dr. Johnson: "A mode of speech in which the meaning is contrary to the words", often seen in terms of meaning being "opposite" to the words. But the meaning is only contrary to the words in the broadest sense, since it is rather a case of the words not expressing the true meaning than of the true meaning being evident behind the words in any precise way.) We have, then in the apprehension of irony an operation involving a reader who perceives a surface (literal) statement and concludes that from certain evidence the words are not to be taken at their face value. The reader will then formulate a notion of the covert meaning "behind" the words. If we apply this process to the apprehension of meaning in fiction we find that it operates in a similar way. A reader perceives a text and concludes from certain evidence the meaning which can be covert or overt. The reader's author will be the personality to whom the meaning will be attributed. If

this meaning is constructed from a text which is delivered by a first person narrator, then the views of the reader's author will only be inferred from the surface (literal) statements made by the narrating agent. In fact irony in turn can be found in a discrepancy between the views expressed by narrators and the views we take to be those of the reader's author, just as there is a possibility of irony in the discrepancy between the narrator's comments and the individual and particular experiences of the characters.[53] When the surface (literal) statements are made by a speaker who is perceived as being a persona as we have defined it, then the apprehension of the reader's author will require a similar construction as the construction of the meaning (albeit negative meaning) of an ironical statement. How we perceive a persona in a narration can be seen as analagous with how we perceive irony in words, since the persona operates as the literal narrator "behind" which the reader's author is the actual apprehended force.

Diagramatically this analogy can be viewed in the following way.



When no irony is perceived the reader is able to make the apprehension of the truth positively, without recourse to an apprehension based on negation of the literal.

Similarly when no persona is perceived the reader may construct the reader's author without the need for a negative definition of his make-up.

Irony Perception and Persona

Given the close analogy between the process of irony and persona recognition, it is useful to use attempts to account for the apprehension of irony as a starting point in an attempt to account for the apprehension of a persona.

D.C. Muecke, in two important articles, "The Communication of Verbal Irony" and "Irony Markers" has discussed the way we recognise irony. His ambit of concern embraces a wide area including authorial factors of creation, as well as the question "on what basis do we infer that what we are reading or hearing is ironical?" which is of central concern to us. In answering this question Muecke recognises the difficulties inherent in a treatment of irony in literature.

> We may often be uncertain whether an author is, in his own persona, ironically praising something that should be blamed, or whether he is being ironical by creating a persona or character whose foolish but confidently expressed praise constitutes (on a separate level) an unconscious and hence ironic self-betrayal of his folly.[54]

His realisation points to the difficulties of assessing the stance of a persona if we rely on its verification by reference to the author's view, and the difficulties raised when a persona exists in an ironical work. Muecke sees certain contextual factors as important to the recognition of irony. As far as the addressee is concerned, his expectations of the statement can be crucial. If he assesses the speaker is unlikely to use irony, or the

material under consideration is not suitable to the use of irony, or is himself insensitive to irony then his likelihood of recognising it is lessened. The communicative competence of the addressee is then a determining factor as is the literary competence of the reader in recognising a semiotic system in literature. Context is provided by the addressee and it may be "a single fact or a whole socio-cultural environment."[55]

Where the addressee has no contextual evidence of the existence of irony, then incongruities within the text can provide evidence. In Muecke's later article he divided these incongruities into two categories: incongruities between text and text and between text and co-text. The latter is achieved by the provision of the missing context alongside the incongruous language. Muecke cites the elegant example of Gibbon reporting on Pope John the Twenty-third.

> [T]he most scandalous charges [against him] were suppressed; the vicar of Christ was only accused of piracy, murder, rape, sodomy and incest.[56]

Again the parallel with persona recognition is evident. Those markers which combine to suspend the persona between author and narrator as character are of this nature; a series of contradictions in the relationship between the narrator and his tale.

Muecke's category of text - text incongruities involves the use of Kinesic, and Phonic markers, neither of which has an application to literature, and Graphic and

Lexical markers, both of which do have an application to literature. Graphic markers are the equivalents of the "irony punctuation mark" which was once suggested.[57] These include the exclamation mark used to indicate either amusement, indignation or pretended admiration, and other punctuation used for a similar effect; inverted commas to express reluctance to use a word, mock hesitations using dashes and asterisks, and the use of underlining or italics to emphasise a word or phrase. None of these devices is available for the detection of personae, but as we shall see later concrete textual features can substitute for them. Lexical markers, defined by Muecke as broadly the use of indirection at the semantic level, by the use of hyperbole, parody, mock hesitation and words which are always ironical, are another manifestation of the literary representation of reality being at odds with versimilitude. They equate with those signs discussed by Riffaterre which displace, distort or create meaning.[58] In a form of communication that is the essence of indirection this is of course no more than would be expected.

The way we perceive personae is similar to the way we perceive irony and indeed any form of indirection. It is with those indicators which are specifically indicators of a persona that I wish to deal now. That is, those markers which leave the reader's view of the narrator suspended between the two poles of author and character, and those textual ungrammaticalities which contribute to the

postulation of a persona.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER FOUR

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[6] David Lewis, "Truth in Fiction", American Philosophical Quarterly, 15, No. 1 (January 1978), p. 39.

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[9] K. Kuiper and Vernon A. Small, "Possible Worlds and Narrative Technique", alternatively titled "Constraints on Fiction", (Unpublished paper, University of Canterbury, 1983). I am indebted to Kon Kuiper for many fruitful discussions which helped crystalize many of the ideas

expressed in this chapter, and which helped us both cross the dividing line between Literature and Linguistics.

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[17] ibid., p. 86.

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[34] Michael Riffaterre, "Interpretation and Descriptive Poetry: A Reading of Wordworth's 'Yew Trees'", New Literary History, 4 (Winter 1973), p. 232.

[35] D.C. Muecke, "The Communication of Verbal Irony", Journal of Literary Semantics, 2 (1973), pp. 35 - 42, and Walker Gibson, (1950).

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[38] G.T. Wright, The Poet in the Poem, p. 32.

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[56] D.C. Muecke, (1973), p. 40.

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CHAPTER FIVE

TEXTUAL UNGRAMMATICALITIES AND PERSONA MARKERS

Introduction

Now that the way the narrative stance will be perceived has been established, and a distinct narrative stance to which the term persona can be usefully applied has been isolated, it is time to consider just how a reader postulates a narrator who stands in that ambivalent truth conditional relationship to his material, and to himself. That is, just what are the "markers" to the postulation of a persona?

I will deal with these persona markers in the following loose sub-categories

(i) References to the process of writing and to the writer.

(ii) References to, or awareness of the problems of narrative story-telling and the manipulation of time, setting and plot chronology. The idiosyncracies of narrative choice and unfulfilled narrative intentions. Claims of correspondential truth.

(iii) The dual role of intratextual biographical data.

(iv) Arbitrary markers. The title, the

historical author, and other formal features of a text's presentation, outside the tale itself.

(v) Multiple narrators and their function in creating an ambivalence between author and character.

(vi) The effect of the concrete elements of the text's presentation; prefatory material, spacing, parentheses, and the use of direct and indirect speech.

These categories are only guidelines to the treatment which follows, and do not represent strictly delineated areas. The majority of these categories will equate with Muecke's text - co-text markers. The last is the closest persona markers come to text - text markers while, as I have indicated text - context markers are a function of the reader who provides the only context available.

Self-reference and Reflexivity

One of the most obvious ways that a narrator can assert his authorial status is by references to the activity of writing. In using the pronoun "I" a narrator is, by implication, casting himself in the role of author, so in the most general way first person narrating is a marker. However there are more overt ways of achieving this which highlight the fact. For example the narrator of Oliver Goldsmith's The Vicar of Wakefield narrates in the first person, yet never refers to the activity of writing, nor to the formal trappings of the text. There is no recognition that this is anything but a straight narrative, unaware of its medium. It could be an oral presentation as easily as it is a written one with no logical inconsistency.

Compare this with Tobias Smollett's Roderick Random where the narrator's tale is directed to the reader thereby emphasising the text as a written document. But the reader is treated as a function - almost as the reading process, and not addressed in person.

> ... in the course of which the reader must perceive how ...[1]

Brief summaries of the ensuing chapter are given by the narrator at the start of each. In addition the "author" provides a Preface discussing the various elements of the story and the decisions which went into the writing of the tale. This is followed by an Apologue delivered

again in the first person, but without any clear indication of which of the narrators - the author or Roderick - speaks to the addressee, "Christian reader", although the Apologue discusses the role of the artist and this would suggest that it is the author speaking.

The effect of these devices is to focus the reader's attention on the medium as well as the message, and lead him to question just how the narrators relate to the tale. The result of this consideration is in turn to separate the author from the narrator Roderick, and emphasise the fictive nature of the latter. Hence it is not surprising that the reader whom Roderick addresses is addressed so obliquely. Were he to speak more directly he would be caught in a logical impossibility brought about by the author's Preface. Unless, that is, we allow that the reader is bifurcated into a fictional reader in Roderick's tale, and a reader in the prefatory material who is true in a different world, or that at different moments he is both. Since the narrator of the body of the work is clearly established as fictional, the author of the prefatory material will be the only possible persona here, yet he appears as little more than a reader's author since the effect of the emphasis on the process of writing is to highlight the distinction between author and narrator, not blur it. He could also be treated as another, fictional narrator who calls himself the author, but such sophistication is unwarranted in this particular case.

This is not the case in Laurence Sterne's Tristram

Shandy. Here the author is constantly aware of his role in the creating process, and that he is narrating a written tale; a tale which is his tale. The fictional and the authorial are from the start inextricably linked. The narratee is reminded of the author's awareness of the writing process.

> What were the consequences, and what was Yorick's catastrophe thereupon, you will read in the next chapter.[2]
>
> I have a strong propensity in me to begin this chapter very nonsensically, and I will not baulk my fancy. -- Accordingly I set off thus:[3]
>
> BOOK II
>
> Chapter I
>
> I have begun a new book, on purpose that I might have room enough to explain the nature of the perplexities in which my uncle Toby was involved, ...[4]

The examples are legion and all serve to legitimise the voice of the speaker as the author as well. He is so aware of the divisions in the book, and the fact that he produces them, that he must be the author since those divisions do indeed tally with divisions as we see them. And if that were not enough he is also aware of the book, claims knowledge of us as readers, knows we will buy the book, and that he will get the profits.

> As it will not take up above fifty pages, it would be injustice to the reader, not to give him a minute account of that romantic transaction, as well as of the siege itself, in Rapin's own words:
>
> Chapter VI
>
> --- But courage! gentle reader! --- I scorn it ---

> 'tis enough to have thee in my power --- but to make use of the advantage which the fortune of the pen has now gained over thee, would be too much --- No --- ! ... ere I would force a helpless creature upon this hard service, and make thee pay, poor soul! for fifty pages, which I have no right to sell thee ...[5]

Through all this it is impossible for the reader, even though in a truth conditional account he is not the reader addressed, to preserve any illusion of the truth of the account that he reads, as he is repeatedly reminded of the process by which the tale comes to him and of the trappings of the narrative process. The heavy emphasis on the authorial position does not divorce the author from the tale of course. Instead he becomes a character, and the leading character, in his own tale. This is not surprising in itself since the story is after all his own supposed autobiography. What is interesting is that the reader's interest centres on his character in its authorial manifestation. The predominant vision we have of the speaker is gleaned from his narrative methods; indiscriminate, discursive and idiosyncratic, and not from the events of his life. For we soon become aware that that life is so severely refracted by being filtered through the personality of the speaker that the speaker's personality is all that we are left with. It is this personality and the attempt to express its workings which form the action of the novel. As William Holtz has said, Tristram Shandy focuses on the "selfconscious act of writing rather than on the thing written about ..." and on "the continued unsuccessful struggle of its hero to shape the flux of his

mind into a coherent narrative, a struggle that reveals the inadequacy of narrative, and of temporal analysis generally."[6]

This constant attention to the processes and problems associated with writing provides us with a well documented character who in turn exemplifies, and shares the same problems with, the reader's author, as they are problems of all narration. In Swearingen's words the "problems encountered in the process of writing ... are not fictional problems ... even if they are the ostensible concerns of Tristram".[7] The speaker is, as a result, suspended in the reader's apprehension between his role as author and as fictional character. Swearingen sees the effect as one of "maintaining the authenticity of the autobiographical voice ... the psychic distancing of the fictional character in a tension that holds the reader in a state of some uncertainty."[8] What Swearingen's reader experiences is the duplicitous nature of the persona.

Our awareness of the narrative problems experienced at the level of the reader's author does as much to dispel any delusion we may have that the speaker is the flesh and blood author as does what Swearingen calls our natural ""resistance" that comes from knowing that we are in fact reading fiction".[9]

The Narrator's Narrative Awareness

In discussing references to the writing process, and their role in the process of persona recognition, I have touched on the awareness a supposed author shows of the problems of story-telling as a further indicator of a persona. I wish to discuss these in more detail now.

Normally the effect of a discussion of the difficulty of story-telling will concentrate the reader's attention on that process and emphasise the inevitably fictional nature of narrative. In particular, a reader will be drawn to question the possibility of the supposed author's factual existence, or the factuality of the presentation of him, if the difficulty that that author has in presenting a "true" picture of a character is highlighted.

Take for example the author of Vanity Fair. His first address to the reader demonstrates the fictional nature of the tale and the choices which are made by the tale's creator.

> I know that the tune I am piping is a very mild one (although there are some terrific chapters coming presently), and must beg the good-natured reader to remember, that we are only discoursing at present about a stock-broker's family in Russell Square, ... We might have treated this subject in the genteel, or in the romantic or in the facetious manner. ... suppose we had resorted to the entirely low, and described what was going on in Mr. Sedley's kitchen;- how black Sambo was in love with the cook ...[10]

Later he refers again to the fiction of his tale, mentioning a "brother of the story-telling trade", who

became enraged at the actions of the characters "whose wicked deeds he was describing and inventing".[11] In doing so the author of Vanity Fair wishes to emphasise his distinction from the characters he describes. But in order to achieve that he provides us with evidence of another personality who does not sneer "at the practice of devotion, which Miss Sharp finds so ridiculous."[12] Of this personality we learn more as the novel progresses. He does not "claim to rank among the military novelists"[13] but this non-combatant novelist, writing of the actions of non-combatant personnel, heads his chapters "In Which Amelia Joins Her Regiment" or "Amelia Invades The Low Countries".

The supposed author does attempt to justify his intrusion concerning those who live well on nothing a year, by pointing out that " 'I' is here introduced to personify the world in general"[14]. Yet the novelist who "knows everything" asks that the public newspapers not print extracts of his account of how the Crawleys achieved this, because he believes he ought "as the discoverer (and at some expense, too), to have the benefit". The narrator with his abhorrence of military detail is in fact fascinated by the military and uses the European war as a grotesquely inappropriate parallel to the events his non-combatants are involved in. And as his narrative intentions are unfulfilled in this regard, so does he fail to act upon his own opinion that the novelist "knows everything". It is as if he allows his characters to exist

outside his own imagination - as if he becomes an observer, a first person narrator and not an author at all. For instance he is unsure of the reason for Joseph Sedley's return to India, and speculates that "[e]ither his furlough was up, or he dreaded to meet any witnesses of his Waterloo flight."[15] He is not sure of the states of mind of his own inventions: "I don't think they were unhappy";[16] on some occasions and certain at others: "though she was so very happy indeed."[17]

In fact the fictional world the supposed author creates, and the factual world he claims to inhabit, dovetail at several points as the story itself, and the comments he makes on the story, merge. For example, he muses at one stage about the journey he once took along the same route as that taken by Becky Sharp. He ends his contemplation with the following lament.

> Alas! we shall never hear the horn sing at midnight, or see the pike-gates fly open anymore. Whither however is the light four-inside Trafalgar coach carrying us? Let us be set down at Queen's Crawley without further divagation, and see how Miss Rebecca Sharp speeds there."[18]

The vehicle for the writing, the novel, becomes associated with the carriage. The factual and the fictional fuse in the creating process in the mind of the narrator, and from being fellow nostalgics the readers are invited to inhabit the fictional world, alight from the coach and "see" how Becky speeds there. That the process of writing is of prime importance at this point is further emphasised by the

occupatio employed in the preceding paragraphs, where we are presented with an extraordinarily long sentence detailing the events of the journey - presented as a series of events we will not be told. "How the young man from Cambridge sulkily put his five great coats in front ... need not be told here."[19]

At other times the inspiration, often absurd, behind the fictional creation is revealed, or some corroborative scene from the narrator's "real" world is presented as proof of the accuracy of his fictional representation of life.

> And do not let my respected reader exclaim against this selfishness as unnatural. It was but this present morning as he rode on the omnibus from Richmond: while it changed horses, this present chronicler, being on the roof, marked three little children ...[20]

The reference to children's behaviour operates in the reader's mind as an inferred comment from the reader's author, and is as such at variance with the narrator's overt reason for mentioning the incident. Together the inferred comment and the overt purpose act as a binary system causing the narrator to be suspended between his existence as author and as fictional narrator.

While the narrator gives us details of his role as author the narrator also provides us with a detailed view of himself. In a perceptive account of the narration of Vanity Fair, Roy Pascal sees the narrator in a double role with two voices. One is as a near omniscient, absolute

authority, and the other as a personalised narrator with personal sympathies and antipathies and a moralising streak. He distinguishes two personalities so completely, that he sees the second as a male, but the first as neither male nor female. I would argue that it is the combination of the two in the one speaking voice which constitutes a persona, and that the duality exists in the one entity rather than as two beings performing the function of narrator.[21]

The effect of these oscillations between the first person narrator who treats his tale as fact, and the author who acknowledges the fictional elements of his tale, is finally to create an ambiguous narrator in much the same mould as that of Tristram Shandy. We are left with a persona who simultaneously appears as the author and, necessarily for the narration of the tale in the form it takes, a first person fictional narrator.

Vanity Fair too contains examples of the foregrounding of the narrative process. In particular in the foregrounding of the narrative perspective as it alters with regard to time and place.

Of course all readers are aware of the manipulation of time, setting and plot which is involved in the process of story-telling, but it is the foregrounding of this manipulation which forces readers to consider just how the story comes to them. Conventionally, when a narrator moves his perspective in time or place he will indicate this. In Vanity Fair the narrator goes even further and both

indicates it overtly and shows an awareness of the reader's place in the process. So we have "we are not going to follow the worthy old stock-broker, "or more obviously still, "[t]he astonished reader must be called upon to transport himself ten thousand miles to the military station at Bundlegunge" to indicate shifts in space in the narrative.[22] Similarly, we have an indication of both spatial and temporal shift in the narrative when we hear that the "kind reader must please to remember - while the army is marching ... that there are a number of persons living peaceably in England."[23] How this focusing on the manipulation of the narrative affects the reader's position in relation to the narration, can be seen by comparison with an alternate way of presenting such a shift. We could have for example: "Ten thousand miles away in the military station of Bundlegunge". In this case the shift of perspective is indicated but the reader's disorientation is not underscored, and indeed all readers, even unsophisticated ones, are used to making such shifts as a matter of course and would certainly not be "astonished" by it.

As the reader's attention is drawn to the narrative process by such techniques, he is constantly confronted with the nature of the narrative and the personality of the narrator. His ability to "suspend disbelief" is impaired and not enhanced, as a result. Rather than being drawn into the tale, the reader must continually acknowledge the fictional aspects of it while applying the suspension of

disbelief needed to understand even a work which is recognisably fiction. The reader's assessment of the text is as a result, suspended between treating it as fact and a recognition that it is fiction, and overtly fiction at that. Both the tale and the teller inhabit a shifting world between fact and fiction, which is the preserve of the true persona.

Biographical Details of a Narrator

When biographical details of the narrator are provided in the text a similar ambivalence between author as fact and author as fiction can occur.

The narrator of Joan Didion's A Book of Common Prayer is named Grace Stresser-Mendana, née Tabor and she tells the story of Charlotte Douglas. She gives a potted history of herself and family, all, so she tells us, with one object in mind.

> I tell you these things about myself only to legitimize my voice. We are uneasy about a story until we know who is telling it. In no other sense does it matter who 'I' am; 'the narrator' plays no motive role in this narrative, nor would I want to.
>
> Gererdo of course does play a motive role. I do not delude myself there ... I am interested in Charlotte Douglas only in so far as she passed through Boca Grande, only in so far as the meaning of that sojourn continues to elude me.[24]

The narrator may be right when she says we are uneasy about a story until we know who is telling it. That the narrator plays no motive part in the tale, however, is seriously in doubt, both in terms of the dictates of all fiction, and of the tale she tells. There is, for instance, a suggestion that she may delude herself in the phrasing of the assertion about Gerardo's motive role. "I do not delude myself there," covertly implies "even if I delude myself about my own role". Her interest in Charlotte is not only in her sojourn at Boce Grande, but also, and more importantly, in the meaning and its elusiveness for her.

Despite her disclaimer, she, and all narrators, must fulfil a motive role in the tales they tell.

We have in Grace then, a narrator whose personality filters the text of the story as all narrators' personalities do. However her position is made ambivalent by a number of factors. Firstly, the use of the first person pronoun is ambivalent in itself. 'I' is both in and out of quotation marks, is both the speaker and the cited person. 'I' attempts to legitimize her voice, and in so doing reveals her own knowledge of the reader's reaction to a narrator - that a reader is uneasy until the narrator is known. But 'I' also uses the very term that is synonymous with the use of the mask or the persona - the 'voice'. Once we are aware of the ambivalence of the 'I' we will be aware of the possible ambiguity in the statement that " 'the narrator' plays no motive force in this narrative, nor would I want to." Of course initially we take the 'I' to be identical with the 'narrator' but the sentence could also contain another, authorial, 'I', who would not want to play a motive part in the narrative, the 'nor' being the complement to an implied 'neither'. The voice which is legitimized then becomes an adoption of the author, and the 'I' is both Grace and the reader's author simultaneously. This 'I' can then be seen to both recount the story of Charlotte as known fact, and be aware of the advantages of legitimizing the voice of the narrator in a fiction.

Biographical Details of the Author and other Arbitrary Markers

Where no such ambivalence is created by the inclusion of biographical data, that data can still perform a dual role in both legitimizing the narrator by providing the corroborative evidence of his characteristics, and providing some clue to his necessary distinction from the reader's author. It would be a perverse reader indeed who, for instance, did not equate the author he infers from a text at least nominally with the true author. As a result of the identification of the reader's author with the true author any discrepancy between the name of the author advertised on the cover (often the only biographical data we have) and the name of the supposed author used in the text, must produce a resultant discrepancy rather than identification in the mind of the reader. However alone this would be no more than an indication of a fictional first person narrator. A more detailed set of these arbitrary features of a text's presentation occurring outside the tale, but inside the book, would be needed to establish a possible identification between the narrator and the author.

Information such as details of the author's life gleaned from the dust cover would be one source. As a rule however these clues are unreliable as they too are subject to fictionalisation. Unless the possibility of fictionalisation of such data were recognised, a reader of

a George Eliot novel would be justified in concluding that a female narrator must be distinct from the reader's author, just as a case could be made for the same distinction between Flaubert and Madame Bovary.

What I have called intratextual and arbitrary markers supply details of an author which may tempt the reader to seek corroboration of any identity he may feel between the real author and his speaker, in evidence obtainable outside the text. Indeed this type of marker invites the reader to commit the so-called biographical fallacy. Given that I have eschewed the use of such data in the establishment of a persona in a text (or rather denied the reader access to knowledge of this type) then in the case of, say, Madame Bovary two interpretations must be allowed to co-exist. Clearly if other evidence could be found that the reader's author was indeed a woman then the question would be satisfactorily resolved for the text, albeit erroneously for the actual world.

In conclusion, then, the existence of biographical data can create an ambivalent relationship between the narrator and his tale. This is caused by the simultaneous affirmation of personalised characteristics of the narrator with the affirmation of his role as author. If in fact we cannot or do not check these facts against the facts of the author's life, we are left with a residual uncertainty even without any clear textual indication of a dual role, to use Pascal's term, within the single speaker. This more fundamental uncertainty is a direct result of our

ignorance. The personalised characteristics could just as easily equate with the reader's author as with those of a fictional first person narrator. In the absence of any textual marking we are left not so much with an ambivalent as an ambiguous narrator - not with a narrator who is both reader's author and character simultaneously, but with a narrator who could be either but not both. This is only uncertainty as to the relationship between the narrator and his tale, not evidence that a persona exists.

Multiple Narrators

We have already seen that any concentration on the narrator will tend to focus interest on how the narrator relates to his tale. Whether for instance he narrates it as fact or fiction and whether he is aware of the activity in which he is involved. Such an effect is augmented by the use of multiple or embedded narrators. With an increase in the number of exits and entrances of narrators we are made increasingly aware of the way the tale comes to us, of the narrative structure in its largest sense. At the same time we have more examples of the transition from one narrator to another, at which time we can observe the relationship between the tellers and their tales as well as their relationships with the primary narrator, or co-narrator, and his tale.

Co-narrators

If the primary narrators are truly co-narrators then it is axiomatic that in a truth conditional account of narrative both could be personae while one singly could not be since they must inhabit the same world. However since in the few examples of co-narration there are, the narrators are first person fictional speakers rather than personae, such a contention must remain hypothetical.

It is interesting to note that in a curious way even when so called co-narrators exist, the impression created

is likely to be one of the embedding of one narrator's tale in the tale of the other. Usually the first chronologically will predominate rather than the two narrators being seen as speaking directly to the reader.

Let us consider the narrative structure of what has been called a novel with co-narrators, Wuthering Heights. The narration opens with a diary-like entry from Lockwood who is then told a part of the tale by Mrs. Dean. Her story begins with the following words.

> Before I came to live here, she commenced, waiting no further invitation to her story, I was almost always at Wuthering Heights ...[25]

She completes this section of her tale with,

> But Mr. Lockwood ... I could have told Heathcliff's history, all you need to hear, in half-a-dozen words.
>
> Thus interrupting herself, the housekeeper rose ...[26]

Clearly Mrs. Dean's tale is embedded in Lockwood's. His speech is predominant even when it is ostensibly her story. His own words are interpolated into her story ('she commenced') and are not separated by even the convention of reported speech marks. Yet despite all this we have no evidence (although we may suspect the veracity of any report of someone else's story), that the words are anything but faithfully rendered. By the beginning of Volume Two, however, Lockwood changes his approach to the retelling of Mrs. Dean's story, or at least admits to a minor alteration of her tale which may have always been his

method.

> I'll continue in her own words, only a little condensed. She is, on the whole, a very fair narrator and I don't think I could improve her style.
>
> In the evening, she said ...[27]

Further explorations of the narrative relationship between Lockwood and Mrs. Dean are made later but the examples I have given suffice to show that the two are not co-narrators because they do not both stand in the same relationship to either the story or the reader. Mrs. Dean has no way of speaking without Lockwood mediating what she says. She could not, for instance, condense his words as he does hers.

Another interesting attempt to achieve co-narration is Diderot's Jacques Le Fataliste. Jacques and his master tell their tales as equals, each speech headed with the name of the speaker. Yet even here a narrator is provided to fill in the details and comment on the stories.

Still another attempt, The Pigman, a chidren's story by Paul Zindel, is told in alternate chapters by the two principal characters, with no unifying narrator. The two narrators refer to the writing process; they are writing it on their teacher's typewriter. One of the narrators, Lorraine, says "I should never have let John write the first chapter".[28] Each corrects the other's account, but generally they take it in turns once the narration proper gets underway. When the evidence of the author's name on the cover is discounted, the reader is forced to one of

three conclusions. Either the story and the narrators are true in the actual world, or the narrators are true, but the story is a fiction, or the whole tale, including the mechanics of its writing, is fictitious. Every attempt is made within the book to force the first conclusion on the reader; documents, clippings, doodles, are all included. It would take a detailed, and perhaps ultimately unsustainable analysis to prove that stylistically the two narrators share common features or that neither can really be the age they claim to be. In the final analysis the reader relies only on the prior knowledge he has; that what he reads is fiction; in order to reject this first interpretation. Of the other two possibilities, either is sustainable unless we realise that under a truth conditional analysis the children are carried into the fictionality of their tale by the fact that they tell their tale as known fact. Under a truth conditional analysis we can, then, refute the second possibility.

This leaves us with the last possibility, clearly the correct one, that both the tale and the tellers are fictitious. Despite their claims to authorship they are as fictitious as any character in a novel. Our vision of the reader's author is not of the author playfully pretending to be John and Lorraine but of the author attempting to get inside his characters and present them in the most convincing way possible. Within the fictional world they never even hint at being anything but themselves. That is not to say the question of fact and fiction in narration

does not arise. The novel is preceded by a signed statement from the two narrators in which they promise to "record the facts, and only the facts", a resolution in which they are noticeably unsuccessful. Their inability to adhere to the facts is the self-same problem that we will see the Bom having later in A Soldier's Tale.

In the final analysis the attempt to incorporate two narrators within the one book is unconvincing. The impression that remains is of a book written about two youngsters writing a book, rather than a book actually written by them. It is in the failure of the perceived intent of the reader's author rather than in the perceived conscious portrayal of that failure that we must reject the hypothesis that the book contains personae. Had the book forced the reader to conclude that the reader's author was saying "here is a book in which I pretend to be two young people writing a book but let you know that they are not really me by revealing the pretence to you" then that would be a persona. What we have is a book containing two supposed authors neither nor both of which are seen in any way as a mask for the author. Zindel has created an interesting and unsettling narrative structure by combining multiple narration and supposed authorship, but since the reader is forced to conclude that both "authors" are totally fictitious, then the experiment fails. The obvious incompatibility of the two concepts is too unsettling to accept.

The stylistic problems presented by an attempt to

create co-narrators were, in Geoffrey Tillotson's opinion, too great even for Charles Dickens to surmount. In Bleak House Dickens created two narrators. The first is the disembodied third person narrator who provides the background and those facts which the other narrator, a first person narrator called Esther, cannot know. The former shows no sign of knowing the narrative framework of the novel while the latter begins her story thus,

> I have a great deal of difficulty in beginning to write my portion of these pages, for I am not clever.[29]

Her story is concluded by the statement:

> The few words that I have to add to what I have written are soon penned; then I and the unknown friend to whom I write will part forever. Not without much dear remembrance on my side. Not without some, I hope, on his or hers.[30]

Initially the impression is that the unknown friend is the reader, but it is also possible to view it as the other narrator who has come by this knowledge. Certainly if no other evidence suggests it, the chronological appearance of the third person narrator first, and the reference to 'Esther's Narrative' in the chapter headings, leads inevitably to the conclusion that the third person narrator is the primary narrator and that Esther's tale is embedded. As I have said, Tillotson sees another, stylistic, indication that the two narrators merge. He blames this on Dickens.

> Esther at points becomes Dickens himself because he could not keep himself out.[31]

Tillotson would have been on safer ground had he seen the narrator as distinct from Dickens, but he is undoubtedly right that the stylistic distinction breaks down from time to time. When the style of the third person narrator is seen in the tale of the first person narrator, then the reader will be likely to conclude that the whole book is the former's, and that Esther is a fictional or embedded narrator in his tale.

In conclusion it is theoretically conceivable that the use of co-narrators could act as a persona marker. However so few have been produced that sufficient evidence is lacking. It seems more likely that where co-narrators do occur the pressures will force a reader to treat them as characters even when some claim is made for joint authorship. Considerably more evidence would be required for a reader to postulate a persona/personae in a text with co-narrators than in an equivalent text with a single narrator.

In general, attempts to create co-narrators reveal that the tendency is always toward an embedded type of narrative even when it at first appears that the narrators are on equal terms. These attempts also reveal that where co-narrators do occur the result is unconvincing and unsettling.

Embedded Narration

The tendency towards embedding of narration follows the convention in the telling of oral narrative that only one person tells a tale. Where more than one person does tell a tale, the effect is likely to be comic or annoying and direct the listener's attention away from the tale and toward the telling of it. This is also the case with embedding in oral narrative although a long period of reported speech is unlikely to occur without frequent interpolations from the primary speaker. These interpolations may only serve to re-address the words reported, "she said" or "he commenced" for example.

In written narration a long section can be delivered without such references and reminders of the "true" speaker being inserted. In Wuthering Heights we frequently hear Mrs. Dean address Lockwood, and his own interruptions are short but regular enough to remind the reader of the real narrative situation. But in a novel like Lord Jim we receive only infrequent reminders and as a result the reader becomes automatised to the single quotation marks which begin each paragraph and these markers become backgrounded by repetition. Although these marks are designed to inform the reader of the true nature of the narrative situation, they become part of the furniture of the text. The true narrator who establishes the hypothetical situation of Marlow's tale tends to melt into the background once he has set the scene, and Marlow

becomes the dominant narrator.

> Perhaps it would be after dinner, on a veranda draped in motionless foliage and crowned with flowers, in a deep dusk speckled by fiery cigar-ends. [32]

When narratives are embedded we become aware of the narrative situation. The way the tales are told by the various narrators is foregrounded, and the reader becomes the audience to a hierarchy of reported stories culminating in the tale he reads. At each narrative level the reader becomes aware of the imprint of the narrator on the tale, on the selection of the tale, and on its manner of telling. Each subsequent narrator will have the same influences on the tale or tales he retells, so the real form, content and narration of the tales will be lost in the distortions created by subsequent tellers. At each retelling the res gestae of both the original event and the original telling of the tale, the historia rerum gestarum, is subject to a further distortion in each subsequent historia rerum gestarum. And just as the story and the facts of the story are subject to distortion, so is the view of the narrator of each tale. Consequently the boundaries of each tale can also become blurred. Each is an element in a larger tale, and ultimately an element of the primary narrator's tale, since the distinction between each is largely illusory.

When a reader is faced with this foregrounding of the relationship between fact and fiction, between the true nature of things (and people) and their appearance in

narrative, he is forced inevitably to consider the primary narrator in the same way, since he is also a story teller. His story, too, will be stamped with his personality, and the view we have of him will be both a part of a story, and the result of a story.

The embedding of narration can be seen, then, to be a force which will direct the reader's interest toward the narrative situation and its ramifications. As a result, the reader will be drawn to consider the primary narrator's position in the scheme of things. With the evidence of the embedded narrators before him, it is highly likely that he will question both the status of the primary narrator in relation to the facts he narrates, and the fact of his own existence. Such questioning will not always result in the postulation of a persona. The primary narrator of Marlow's tale in Lord Jim treats the story of Jim and the existence of Marlow as fact in his world, even though the account he gives of Marlow's account is hypothetical, in as much as that story is not told as reported fact, but as a reconstruction of how Marlow may have told the tale. The primary narrator is a fictional narrator who does not purport to be the author of the book Lord Jim. The reader's author will be perceived as having created this narrator, but created him as a wholly fictional entity and not as a front which masks him. The predominant concerns of the book will be placed at the door of the reader's author and not of the primary narrator. However, we receive such a minimal amount of information about this

narrator that it is difficult to establish any sound detailed view of him distinct or otherwise from the reader's author.

In the case of the narrator of The Heart of Midlothian, we receive a far greater amount of information, since a far greater amount of the tale is filtered through his mind. But again the narrator treats the tale as fact, not fiction, and is distinguished from the reader's author as a result. In neither of these works is the "third person narrator" considered to be a persona.

Embedding then, like any of the means by which the narrative process is foregrounded, directs the reader's attention toward the narrative structure and ultimately towards the nature of the primary narrator. As such it acts as a persona marker, but not as an infallible indication of the existence of a persona. The result of a reader's concentration on that narrator may be that he concludes that the narrator is not a persona, but a fully fictional narrator.

It would not be too extreme to say, however, that the undermining of the integrity of any narrator and any narration is a by-product of the embedding of narration. Consequent upon this, the integrity of the primary narrator, even as a fictional entity will be brought into question in a tale containing embedded narrative.

If the use of embedded narration and ambivalent narrators is more common in modern fiction (and of course there is no way to measure this although that is what

intuition indicates), then an increase in the use of that narrative mode would be consistent with Scholes' contention that:

> Modern fabulation accepts, even emphasises, its fallibilism, its inability to reach all the way to the real. ... It aims at telling such truths as fiction may legitimately tell in ways which are appropriately fictional.[33]

Aspects of Textual Presentation as Persona Markers

Just as we have seen that the use of embedded narration can lead to the blurring of the boundaries between individual narrators' tales, so will the use of certain elements of textual presentation create a similar effect. Again the result of this blurring will be the foregrounding of the narrative process, and often the removal of the clear dividing line between fact and fiction.

The appending of prefatory material to a narrative can operate in much the same way as the embedding of narrative. It is really just a special case of embedding where the reader is asked to treat the tale itself as one homogenous work with the various prefatory materials outside it. Clearly to do so would result in a better, more complete suspension of disbelief. However, the nett effect of the appearance of such material is to highlight the narrative process much more clearly than when a narrative is embedded. The suspension of disbelief is made more, rather than less, difficult by the addition of attempts, say, by the author to speak in his own voice to his readers.

Take for example the series of prefatory material to Swift's A Tale of a Tub, Fifth Edition, 1710. The first is a list of works by the same author which, we are told, will be "speedily published". The second is "An Apology" for the ensuing tale written by the author, denying certain meanings which have been put upon the tale and elucidating

others. This is followed by a postscript refuting a suggestion that the tale had more than one author. Next comes a dedication to John Lord Sommers by the bookseller followed by a note from the bookseller to the reader. Then comes the Epistle Dedicatory to Prince Posterity by the author. Finally we are given the Preface, the Introduction, and the tale itself.

The prolegomena occupy fully one third of the tale, and the prefatory material outside the tale itself (that is, not including the Introduction which comprises Section I) half of that. This proliferation operates as satire on the habit of including such lengthy antecedents. But it also serves to highlight and cast doubts upon the aims, nature and identity of the writer. By the time the reader comes to the text itself he is unsure of the author, the authority of the text, whether or not it is complete, to whom it is dedicated, and whether or not the various sections are written by one or more hands. The narrating process and the personality of the narrator are brought to the fore and the reader is left uncertain about both. Not only does the prefatory material's inclusion raise the issue of the questionable factuality of the "fiction" and the question of the narrator's true nature, but the subject matter of that material also centres on these questions and leaves them unresolved.

When a narrative is embedded, or involves the use of more than one narrator or narrative viewpoint, then the way these different narrative positions are differentiated can

be manipulated in order to both obfuscate as well as ostensibly to clarify.

In Wuthering Heights the distinction between the narrators is confused by a more complex structuring of the text. Essentially what we have is an attempt to create an illusion of two narrators. This is achieved by having two separate conventions for the typographical presentation of Mrs. Dean's speech. When Lockwood is the principal narrator Mrs. Dean's words are in reported speech. Unlike the case of Lord Jim, no speech marks are placed around her words when she is the principal narrator. A transition phase is occasionally included which involves a dialogue between Lockwood and Mrs. Dean in which both speakers' words are placed in quotation marks.

Although the motivation for the typographical presentation may well have been simple expediency in dispensing with the need to insert speech marks at the beginning of each paragraph of Mrs. Dean's story, it nevertheless has the effect of unifying the narrative voice since both narrations are presented in the same way. In addition, because Mrs. Dean's tale is by far the longer, she becomes a sort of primary narrator in the reader's mind; an effect which works directly to oppose the effect of the frequent reminders we receive that Lockwood is the primary narrator. This conflicting evidence triumphs at the conclusion of Mrs. Dean's story, where Lockwood's own words are reported by him through Mrs. Dean, and as a result appear in quotation marks.

> I shall be glad when they leave it, and shift to the Grange!
> "They are going to the Grange then?" I said.[34]

David Ireland's novel The Chantic Bird explores the same problems in a slightly different way. Here the chief protagonist agrees to tell the narrator, Peterson, his story, as long as Peterson agrees to write exactly what he is told.

> 'Just put it in my words. That's the most important thing. Just as I tell you'.
>
> That's what I said to him and I looked at every page to see he did it. He even put this in, how I told him what to do.[35]

The tale we receive, then, is the tale Peterson tells us but exactly as it is told to him. The reader is uncertain just who the narrator is. Then the protagonist (himself without a name) kills Peterson and takes over himself.

> I had to pound up the bones with a hammer on the laundry floor and put them round the orange trees. Then I sat at the typewriter and slowly took over my story where Peterson left it, just after he got to the house. I've chopped out a few of his comments where he went off the track a bit ... At least he didn't make my words come out differently; I checked through and they're as I told him.[36]

Once the "new" narrator takes over we are aware that there is no change in the style. This in turn raises the question of whether in fact the narrator, any narrator, really exists if he does his job properly. Although we have a narrator in the story the view we have of him is

expressed totally through the mouth of the person whose tale he is telling. The narrative event implodes, and we are robbed of a narrator because his tale is faithful (and because the protagonist 'chopped out a few of his comments') and because the narrator is killed before the story is completed. The chief character then becomes the narrator and in a way reverses the inevitable occurrence of all narrative, where the teller becomes the chief character and focus of interest. (cf Tristram Shandy.) Had we been apprised of Peterson's murder at the start of the book, the story itself would have been little different, but the reading experience would have been radically altered. Then the protagonist would have been firmly in the position of narrator of the whole tale.

I have concentrated here on the use of quotation marks in distinguishing, or failing to distinguish, between different narrators, and one extreme example where the narrator is made to apparently disappear altogether. There are clearly other ways that distinctions between different speakers can be maintained, and, in turn, confused. For example, spacing, the use of parentheses for one person's speeches, or the use of different type faces, such as italics in the case of Schnitzler's Fraulein Else, to separate one from another, fulfil this function. Since these will normally be specific to individual texts and rarely examples which can be applied universally, I will leave a more detailed discussion until I come to consider examples in some sample texts in the chapters which follow,

in particular M. K. Joseph's A Soldier's Tale.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that a reader is forced to postulate a persona when a number of factors exist. Firstly the primary narrator must be a first person narrator. (It may be possible to make a case for a persona of a character within the text but that is outside the scope of this thesis which deals only with personae of apprehended authors.)

Secondly, that narrator must appear to be suspended betweeen the reader's author and a fully fictitious character, and demonstrate an ambivalent relationship to the factuality of his tale, in particular his own existence. How a reader becomes aware of this ambivalence is through the recognition of certain markers. These will in many cases be insufficient in themselves. When these markers combine to create the narrator who is perceived as being suspended between the conception of the reader's author and the concept of the fictional character then a persona exists.

These persona markers are of various types. Firstly there are those that spring from the linguistic and literary competence of the reader and are in the main specific to the texts in which they occur. As such, generalisations about these markers are not possible. In order to locate these markers in specific texts it is necessary to establish the nature of the reader who will apprehend them.

Secondly there are those markers which are related to the act of self-reference. When there is a high degree of self-reference then the reader is made correspondingly more aware of the personality of the narrator and his part in the tale. Another area of self-reference which also acts as a marker is the text's self-reference and references to the writing and fictionalising process. Certain arbitrary markers, such as a discrepancy between the name of the narrator and the author's name on the cover of the book, also act as very obvious markers.

Thirdly the existence of multiple, particularly embedded, narrators direct the reader's attention to the process by which the tale comes to him, and by which the tale and its narrators relate to each other and to the factuality, or otherwise, of their tales.

Finally there are those aspects of the text's presentation and layout, again often specific to texts and resistant to generalisation, which can affect the reader's perception of the relationship between narrators and between narrators and their tales.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER FIVE

[1] Tobias Smollett, Roderick Random, (London: Dent, 1927), p. 390.

[2] Laurence Sterne, Tristram Shandy, (London: Dent, 1912), p. 21.

[3] ibid., p. 54.

[4] ibid., p. 59.

[5] ibid., p. 354.

[6] William V. Holtz, Image and Immortality: A Study of "Tristram Shandy", (Providence: Brown University Press, 1970), p. 100.

[7] James E. Swearingen, Reflexivity in "Tristram Shandy", (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 4.

[8] ibid., p. 5.

[9] ibid., p. 5.

[10] W.M. Thackeray, Vanity Fair, (London: Collins, 1967), p. 60.

[11] ibid., pp. 83 - 84.

[12] ibid., p. 84.

[13] ibid., p. 272.

[14] ibid., p. 337.

[15] ibid., p. 356.

[16] ibid., p. 358.

[17] ibid., p. 368.

[18] ibid., p. 77.

[19] ibid., pp. 76 - 77.

[20] ibid., p. 211.

[21] Roy Pascal, The Dual Voice, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977).

[22] Vanity Fair, p. 165 and p. 400 respectively.

[23] ibid., p. 340.

[24] Joan Didion, A Book of Common Prayer, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 16 - 17.

[25] Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights, (Oxford: Clarenden Press, 1976), p. 43.

[26] ibid., p. 76.

[27] ibid., p. 192.

[28] Paul Zindel, The Pigman, (London: Heinemann, 1973), p. 7.

[29] Charles Dickens, Bleak House, (New York and Toronto: New American Library, 1964), p. 30.

[30] ibid., p. 877.

[31] ibid., p. 889 in the Afterword to Bleak House.

[32] Joseph Conrad, Lord Jim, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), p. 31.

[33] Robert Scholes, Fabulation and Metafiction, (1980), p. 8.

[34] Wuthering Heights, p. 413.

[35] David Ireland, The Chantic Bird, (Sydney and Melbourne: Angus and Robertson, 1979), p. 2.

[36] ibid., p. 185.

PART II

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Introduction

In the remainder of this thesis I shall consider three examples which have been considered to have a persona by some commentators. These texts have been chosen in order to test the explanatory value of the discrimination that has been made herein: between the persona and other types of narration: on a diverse range of literary instances from a wide range of historical periods. In each I shall identify the various evidence which the reader is presented with in his construction of the narrative and the narrators. This will include the view of the narrator and the reader's author, the truth conditions under which the narration is delivered, and the markers as they have been identified in Part I.

In the first of these, Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess, it will be seen that although there are many of the markers we associate with the appearance of a persona, the location of the reader's author's view in the person of the dreamer makes the postulation of an authorial persona impossible. Instead we find a sophisticated reversal in which the narrator becomes a persona of the dreamer. Because he is wholly within the fiction this dreamer cannot occupy the ambivalent truth conditional position which the postulation of an authorial persona requires.

In the second illustrative example, Swift's satire A Modest Proposal, we again find a number of significant persona markers, particularly those which are reliant on

the reader's context. In this case, although these markers provide the reader with some evidence of the author's views, the narrator's position in relation to himself and his tale does not conform with the truth conditional requirements of a persona. The conclusion is, then, that he is a fictional first-person narrator who, in a few instances, shares some of the reader's author's views and opinions, just as any other fictional character may.

In the last example that is considered, M.K. Joseph's A Soldier's Tale, all of the elements necessary to the postulation of a persona are found to be present. The narrator is presented as author and stands in an ambivalent truth conditional position to his tale and to his own existence.

From the evidence these texts provide, it will be seen that the narrower definition of a persona advocated here limits the number of texts to which the term can be applied. However, it has been shown that terms other than "persona" suffice to describe the narrators in many contentious instances. This will be supported by the conclusions drawn from the first two illustrative examples which follow. Further, the final case of Joseph's novel will show that when the theory expounded here does find a persona, it is discrete from, and is not described by, any other term. By the application of the term persona in the sense advocated in this thesis, the term can once again be used to describe a distinct narrative phenomenon, and shed the wide, vague, and various uses it has been put to, in

favour of a limited and specific application.

CHAPTER SIX

THE BOOK OF THE DUCHESS

Introduction

The first illustrative example on which this thesis will test the explanatory value of the theory outlined in Part I is Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess. This early example of Chaucer's verse narratives has become one of the most contentious instances of "narratological unreliability" in English Literature. But this close attention to the narrator, and specifically to the possibility that he may be totally a literary construct, rather than a being identifiable with Chaucer himself, has been a relatively recent phenomenon. G.L. Kittredge was the first to suggest such a treatment[1] but nearly forty years elapsed before his ideas were taken up and developed by James Kreuzer, Kemp Malone, Bertrand Bronson and Talbot Donaldson.[2]

Although these pioneering critics separated the biographical Chaucer from his narrators, in the case of The Book of the Duchess the nature of the narrator still remains an issue of contention. While, as Martin Stevens has correctly pointed out, there is now "neither need nor call to assume that Chaucer himself ever had a dream about a man in black or, as one scholar contends, that he ever endured a melancholia of 'eight yeere'"[3] there are still

those commentators led by Bronson and Kreuzer and including Lumiansky, Major, Clemen and Severs who see the narrator as an extension of Chaucer, as consistent, skillful and mature.[4] On the other hand there are those critics led by Kittredge himself and including Donaldson, Earle Birney, Stephen Manning, Dorothy Bethurum, Malone and Bernard Huppé,[5] who see the narrator as dull, simple and lacking in understanding. A balanced view of these two possibilities is offered by Thomas Garbaty who astutely suggests that "whether the Dreamer ... is truly imperceptive, or only seems so and acts the part, we shall never know."[6]

Without saying it directly, these commentators essentially disagree over the truth conditions of the narrator's tale. That is, some see a simple or naive or unintelligent man, others an intelligent man acting the part of the dullard to some end, while still others see an intelligent poet adopting a stance (be it intelligent or dull) within the poem. These views divide into two sets of truth conditions, within each of which there are two views of the narrator. In the first, the author creates a narrator who tells his tale as known fact. The picture the reader has of this narrator further divides:

(i) The narrator is a dullard. This dullard tells the story.

(ii) The narrator is an intelligent man. He acts as a dullard in the tale he tells.

In the second, the author's presentation is of himself,

ironically portrayed, and can be viewed in one of two ways:

(iii) The poet adopts the stance of a dullard. He reveals his own true nature in some way.

(iv) The poet adopts the stance of an intelligent man. He reveals that he is not to be equated with this man in some way.

A third possibility suggested by Malone and J.S.P. Tatlock is that Chaucer "nods" at the crucial moment he allows his narrator to overhear the Black Knight's lament and misunderstand it. Condescension aside, such an approach can provide no worthwhile interpretation.

Should it be established from the analysis which follows that (iii) or (iv) above are accurate descriptions of the narrative in the poem, then the necessary truth conditions for the postulation of a persona will be found.

A Reading of "The Book of the Duchess"

The Narrator's "frame"

The reader is introduced to the narrator in the first sixty-one and a half lines,[7] which in combination with lines 1325 to the end comprise the narrator's "frame". He narrates in the present tense, beginning by lamenting his inability to sleep.

> I may nat slepe wel nygh noght;
> I have so many an ydel thoght,
> Purely for defaute of slep ...
> (3 - 5)

The reason for his sleeplessness escapes him, but he guesses that it is a sickness from which he has suffered for eight years. The narrator is singularly unsuccessful in providing any comment on the tale he tells. The reader is given no clue as to who the "phisicien" is who could cure him, and is left with a dissembling assurance that the matter will be left until later. Within this narrative in the continuous present is embedded his tale of certain past events.

> So when I saw I might not slepe
> Til now late, this other night,
> Upon my bed I sat upright
> And bad oon reche me a book ...
> (44 - 47)

The story is Ovid's "Seyx and Alcione" telling of a time when "men loved the lawe of kinde".

In this brief introduction, the reader is introduced to a narrator who tells a tale containing the double embedding of his own recent past, and the classical tale he reads. As we have seen in Chapter Five, the embedding of narration acts, in itself, as a force which directs the reader's attention to the narrative situation, foregrounding the method by which the tale comes to him.

As the narrator's narrative present begins and ends the story, then it must be, as Stevens suggests, that the narrator does not change in the course of the poem.[8] The narrator in the narrative present is still as sleepless, as dulled, and as full of "sorwful ymagynacioun" as he was when he read the tale from Ovid's Metamorphoses.

The narrator's introduction raises two important questions of interpretation. The first is the nature of the sickness which causes his sleeplessness, and the second the related question of who is the one physician who can cure him. While it is widely agreed since Kittredge's article that the narrator is suffering from a fictive suffering and not a Chaucerian, autobiographical suffering it is not clear whether this is caused by love-longing or the death of a loved one. Lumiansky holds that he is bereaved[9], leading to the conclusion that the physician is God or Christ. Robinson, on the contrary, views the "comparison of the lady to a physician [as] a commonplace."[10] Only by reciprocating the narrator's love can she "hele" him.

The important point from our point of view is the lack

of specificity in the narrator's account. His claim of sleeplessness and lack of "quyknesse" and "lustyhede" is verified by his mode of narration. His voice is appropriate to his supposed situation. The truth of his condition is not undermined by the style of its presentation. If, as Bethurum does, we take the suffering to be serious and real then this in turn affects our view of the narrator's dream and its significance. (This presupposes that we treat the narrator as a psychologically accurate portrayal and not as a fictive or structural tool as Major does for the narrator of the Canterbury Tales and Eldredge does in his work.[11]) The dream and the suffering which precedes it lose their relational importance if the latter is apprehended as merely conventional.[12] Robinson's notes suggest that the reader is best advised to read the insomnia only as the construction of the conditions for dreams to be produced under medieval theory.[13] Then the insomnia is merely a convention and psychological verisimilitude is not a criterion by which it should be judged. The connections between the dream and the narrator's own sleeplessness which refute this contention will be discussed later.

J.O. Fichte argues that the narrator's loss (of sleep) is in ironic contrast to the more serious losses of the Black Knight and Alcione who have each lost a spouse.[14] For Fichte the narrator is an object of irony, and not knowingly the source of it. This suggests a reader's author quite distinct from the narrator who is the source

of the irony.[15] Fichte is correct, and a similar relationship between the narrator and the author will be seen in Swift's A Modest Proposal.

In the final ten lines we return to the narrator relating how he awoke and found the book of Seyx and Alcione still in his hand. He thought that the dream was "so queynt" that he would write it down. This, as we have now realised, he has done. Overtly he has gained nothing from the dream and little from the reading of the book. All he seems to have gained is a temporary break in his insomnia.[16] There is no evidence that in fact sleep functions "as a salubrious intermission between an anguished consciousness and a redemptive awakening" as Delasanta concludes.[17] The dreamer does awaken refreshed, but the narrator makes no mention of doing so.

The narrator who concludes the poem is in the same relationship to all that is within the frame as he was at the beginning. He offers no comment on what he has just narrated, and in fact does not return to the matter of the "phisicien ... oon". The narrator's reliability and awareness are undermined, but his relationship to his tale - the truth conditions - is consistent.

The Story of Ceyx and Alcione

The story of Ceyx and Alcione which the reader receives is filtered through the consciousness of the narrator and embedded in his tale. The early part of

Ovid's tale is drastically condensed by the narrator in The Book of the Duchess who "To tellen shortly" sums it all up in only thirteen lines. His interest is clearly not on the love between the classical lovers, nor on the fate of Ceyx, but on the next part of Ovid's tale centring on the grief felt by Alcione and her subsequent dream. The narrator's reaction to Alcione's grief gives us a retrospective clue to the cause of his own sleeplessness.

> Such sorowe this lady to her tok
> That trewly I, which made this book,
> Had such pittee and such rowthe,
> To rede hir sorwe, that, by my trowthe,
> I ferde the worse al the morwe
> Aftir, to thenken on hir sorwe.
> (95 - 100)

Only in Chaucer's narrator's tale do we see Alcione specifically ask for sleep. The story is distorted by the narrator in his obsession with sleep.[18] Structurally the call for sleep also performs the function of linking the transitional story backwards to the introduction, while the dream links it forwards with the dream that the narrator has later. The relationship of the story of Ceyx and Alcione to the reality which precedes it and the dream which follows it I will treat more fully shortly.

As well as sleep, Alcione also asks for an indication in a dream of Ceyx's fate. The narrator has her swoon and she is taken to bed "al naked" and the "dede slep" comes over her. This is not the first time that sleep and death have been linked so closely. Earlier the narrator has connected them when he says:

> And drede I have for to dye.
> Defaute of slep and hevynesse
> Hath sleyn my spirit of quyknesse
> (24 - 26)

This link is strengthened by the description of the cave of Morpheus with its intimations of the underworld. The valley of the cave is devoid of life.

> Ther never yet grew corn ne gras,
> Ne tre, ne [nothing] that ought was,
> Beste, ne man, ne nought elles
> . . . . . .
> This cave was also as derk
> As helle-pit overal aboute.
> (157 - 159, 170 - 171)

Again at the sight of those asleep we see the narrator's interest aroused:

> They had good leyser for to route,
> To envye who myghte slepe best.
> (172 - 173)

Once Alcione's sleep and her dream have been related the narrator wraps the story up as fast as possible:

> With that hir eyen up she casteth
> And saw noght. "Allas!" quod she for sorwe,
> And deyede within the thridde morwe.
> But what she sayede more in that swow
> I may not telle yow as now;
> (212 - 216)

The mention of her death on the third morning after echoes the narrator's "ferde the worse al the morwe / Aftir,". It is important to note too that the narrator "ferde the worse" on the morning after his dream and so clearly can have gained no consolation from his dream. It is the story

of Ceyx and Alcione that remains with him, and later it is the book that he read "Of Alcione and Seys the kyng, / And of the goddes of slepyng," (1327 - 1328) that is in his hands when he awakes. Again the emphasis is on sleeping, and although he ostensibly repeats the Ovidian tale, the book is firmly in his hand.

The narrator cuts the story short at the death of Alcione and the point of the tale: the metamorphosis of the two into Halcyon birds, and their reuniting with their love unchanged: is ignored. The Christian allusion to the three days before the resurrection in the three days of Alcione's mourning before her death, as well as the classical redemption through the love of the two and their metamorphoses, are both left for the reader to supply. The narrator can tell us neither "what she sayede more" nor what more there is to say. The reason is not simply as he claims "Hyt were to longe for to dwelle." (217) The reason is that whatever significance it may have to the reader (and the omission of parts of the story can in a way draw attention to them) it has little or none for him. What significance the reader sees, and what significance the reader sees the reader's author placing on the lacunae, is a different matter. The patterning of symbolism is placed at the feet of the reader's author, while the narrator's selection of the parts he will relate are consistent with the portrayal of him.

Fichte suggests that the narrator misses the point of the Ceyx and Alcione story and betrays his lack of sympathy

with the feelings of others in his bargaining with the gods, but this seems unduly harsh.[19] It is clearly said in jest:

> And in my game I sayde anoon -
>
> but
>
> And yet me lyst ryght evel to pleye -
> (238 - 239)

Robinson glosses the second line as: "And yet I had no desire to joke".

Two difficult lines to interpret. Perhaps it is best read as meaning "I playfully said, although I was quite serious in what I asked for ..." This allows the narrator to continue his desperate desire for sleep, while being consistent with his lack of belief in the classical gods.

In the "frame" the narrator appears to relate his tale as known fact, and nowhere is it suggested that he treats the story as fiction. We are aware of the hand of the reader's author, but that is universal to all writing, but it does not undermine the fictionality of the narrator.

The Dream and the Dreamer

Upon the utterance of his promise to the gods the narrator actually does fall asleep but also receives the other, unasked for, part of Alcione's request: the dream. The dream is not part of his desires, since sleep is all he wants: an instance of the series of oppositions and

contrasts throughout, here with Alcione.

He dreams that he lay naked in his bed listening to the bird song in May. The season contrasts starkly with the barrenness of the valley of the cave of Morpheus. Here there are birds singing (in fact it is the bird song which wakens him) and just as the dream completes the parallel with Alcione (underlined by their shared nakedness[20]) so the birds obtusely complete the Ovidian tale.[21] The links between this further embedding and the events which precede it, are maintained by these oppositions and contrasts. The echoes and reversals serve to place constraints on the tale which we do not associate with reality, although here (in contrast to the effect we will see in Chapter Eight), they occur within an embedded narration which is acknowledged as "fictional" - the dream.

The contrast with the valley of the cave of Morpheus is made in a number of ways. Firstly, by the sheer plenitude of wild life compared to the "Beste, ne man, ne nought elles". Secondly, by a series of verbal echoes similar to that linking Alcione and the narrator. While the valley was "as derk As helle-pit overal aboute" (170 - 171) here there are birds "Upon the tyles, overal aboute." (300) And while some of the inhabitants of the cave "lay naked in her bed And slepe whiles the dayes laste" (176 - 177) the narrator, although he too is naked, does not lay in his bed, but is up at dawn riding in the hunt. In the cave there is only the sound of the water with its "dedly slepynge soun" (162), while in the narrator's bedroom there

is the harmony of the bird song. The cave is dark, while the bedroom is full of the sun's rays. (235 - 240) Assailed by the overwhelming evidence of the parallels and contrasts, the reader must assume that either the narrator is feigning his ignorance of the dream's connection with his life, or that the hand of the author is at work. In view of the portrayal of the narrator, the latter must be the case.

The windows of the bedroom depict the stories of Troy and the Romance of the Rose. The classical story and the more recent Romance act as structural devices linking back to the classical world of the Ceyx and Alcione tale, and forward to the Black Knight's introduction. In addition they mirror major concerns of the poem. Tragedy (of Troy) and Romance (in the Romance of the Rose) exist side by side. Through these works of literature (that is through the window) it is possible to view the outside world: reality; and at the same time the beauty of nature shines through art. Just as at first the reader's attention is drawn to the windows but then, through them, the reality beyond becomes apparent,[22] so, after noticing the windows, the dreamer becomes aware of the hunt without. At this point the poem takes on metafictional qualities as it comments on its own, and art's, place in man's apprehension of the world. Structurally the bedroom links two separate worlds: the reality of the narrator awake, and the imaginatively fictitious world of his dream. Art is the link, just as the art of the story of Ceyx and Alcione was

the link between the reality of the narrator's world and the dream. The two devices, one within "reality" and the other in the world of "imagination" are both manifestations of art. In reality, the one takes the shape of a real book, in imagination the other is symbolically depicted in the stained glass window. As we noted in Part I, this emphasis on reality and art or imagination directs the reader's attention to the process of writing - the medium rather than the message - and in doing so, foregrounds the narrative and consequently the narrator's position in the mediation of that narrative. His own relationship to art and reality is brought into question.

The world the dreamer awakens into is Edenic. If the cave of Morpheus was likened to hell, then this place, with its bird song "had be a thyng of heven." (308) The dreamer's world is disjointed from the world of the narrator in the illogicality of a dream world. The emperor Octavian can ride with the hunt as easily as the dreamer can be naked in bed at one moment and riding his horse out of his room the next.[23] The dreamer awaking naked symbolises a Christian rebirth which echoes Alcione's three days of mourning, while the stories depicted on the dreamer's windows are of destructive earthly love (Troy) and the indictment of earthly love in the Romance of the Rose.[24] Again the symbolic patterning and repetitions place constraints on the tale which we do not associate with actuality but emphasise the fictional medium.

The hunting of the Hert, and the failure of the hounds to prevent it from stealing away down "a privy way" (382) indicates through the pun on hert/hart, and heart, a symbolic failure of a search for some human heart (the seat of love).[25] We have seen Alcione's search, and have been given some indications that the narrator too has suffered some loss. But it is the figure of the Black Knight who will represent most powerfully "the hunting of the heart" in his longing for his lost love Blanche. At each further embedding we see a further echo of the concern with loss, each more fully depicted and more emotionally explicit than before - a point I will discuss more fully later.

The dreamer[26] finds the Black Knight in a place which is, again in contrast to the valley of Morpheus, likened to heaven. Only this time it is as if the earth wants to be "gayer than the heven". But this place is not eternally green and pleasant, for it has experienced winter. However it has forgotten the "sorwes" of that time. It is as if we have moved through the imaginative, edenic, fictional heaven and have now come to a place which, while preserving the pattern of heavenly echo and hellish contrast, is earthly and real. At the centre of the embedding, where one would expect the tale to be at its most fictional, the landscape is most real.

It is amid this joyful plenitude, this celebration of life in the summer of a world in which trees not normally found together, flower together and which experiences real seasons, that the dreamer comes across the Black Knight in

sorrow and in mourning. By a series of verbal echoes he is in turn linked with the narrator and the tale of Ceyx and Alcione. His blackness recalls the dark of the valley of Morpheus, his head "heng ... adoun" (461) just as had the heads of the sleepers in the cave (173 - 175). He spoke "with a dedly sorwful soun" (462) echoing the "dedly slepynge soun" (162) of the valley. He is "pitous pale, and nothying red" (470) as dead it would seem as Ceyx who was described as being "ful pale and nothyng rody." (143)

The dreamer approaches the Knight unobserved (458 - 460) and has no trouble repeating what he overheard:

> ... ful wel I kan
> Reherse hyt ...
>
> (473 - 474)

The Knight is quite explicit in his mourning for his dead lady.

> ... my lady bryght,
> Which I have loved with al my myght,
> Is fro me ded and is agoon.
> Allas, deth, what ayleth the,
> That thou noldest have taken me,
> Whan thou toke my lady swete ...
>
> (477 - 483)

It is clear then that the dreamer, if not the narrator, both hears, and can repeat, the Knight's overheard words. The reader is prepared for a close identification between the narrator and the Knight in a second series of verbal echoes:

For nature wolde nat suffyse
To noon erthly creature
Nat longe tyme to endure
Withoute slep and be in sorwe.
(18 - 21)
Hit was gret wonder that Nature
Myght suffre any creature
To have such sorwe, and be not ded.
(467 - 469)

It is as if the words of the pre-dreaming narrator are only slightly distorted and placed in the mouth of the Knight, while the other elements of the narrator's story: the classical tale and his own sorrow are included in the pot pourri that becomes the dream. So "al naked" resurfaces as a leitmotif in the "al naked" dreamer, and in the "al naked" Knight (577) who is naked not of clothes but of bliss.

With the weight of such evidence, those commentators who see in the Black Knight a spiritual extension of the narrator may be forgiven their anachronistic Freudian excesses.[27]

When the Black Knight does come out of his day-dream and notices the dreamer, the initial exchanges are all politeness. It is only with the dreamer's mention of the hunt that the Black Knight begins to revert to the sorrow which the dreamer has overheard. Up until then in their conversation the Knight has spoken so "goodly" that it seemed he "be another wyght". (530) Appearance and reality are again contrasted, and the Knight, like the dreamer, can be first one man, then another. Pretence is foregrounded.

Offering to help "ese youre herte" the dreamer notes

that the Knight looks at him skeptically:

> With that he loked on me asyde,
> As who sayeth, "Nay, that wol not be."
> (558 - 559)

This perceptive observation is not that of an insensitive or unobservant man. Placed strategically at the first exchange between the two, it must indicate strongly that the dreamer is not the dullard that some critics would have him be. Alternatively the acute perception is reported and noted by the narrator, and only the reported speech can be taken as the dreamer's alone. If this is the case it is difficult to explain the shift from the narrator's dullness before he relates the dream to his acuity now. It is only in the shared first person pronoun, and in the vision which the narrator has that the dreamer is himself, that the confusion arises. If, when the narrator is relating the events of the dream, we substitute the word "dreamer" for the narrator's "I" or "me" the distinction becomes easier to maintain. In this way we can better keep in mind the embedded nature of the narration. This narration divides into:

(i) What I (narrator) observed and tell ("I" as first person).

(ii) What I (dreamer) did, said, and noticed ("I" as third person).

Although the whole dream is told by the dulled narrator there is little if any direct intrusion by him during the dream. It is possible that at times the narrator, thinking

himself the dreamer, does in fact share thoughts and feelings with his dreaming self. At that point the distinction between what is true in the narrator's world and what is true in the dreamer's world becomes impossible for the reader to ascertain. The implications of the blurring between the different narrations in an embedded narration have already been discussed in detail in Chapter Five, and will be seen clearly illustrated in Chapter Eight.

In the Black Knight's first long speech the verbal echoes from the time before the dream continue. He mentions Ovid in his list of those who will not help relieve his sorrow, reminding the reader of the Tale of Ceyx and Alcione (although there has been no specific mention of Ovid's name earlier). In his lament that:

> Ne hele me may no phisicien
> (571)

there is a clear echo of the narrator's:

> For there is phisicien but oon
> That may me hele;
> (39 - 40)

The Knight's challenge:

> But whooso wol assay hymselve
> Whether his hert kan have pitee
> Of any sorwe, lat hym see me...
> (574 - 576)

reminds us of the narrator's claim that when he read of Alcione's sorrow he:

Had such pittee and such routhe
to rede hir sorwe ...
(97 - 98)

The Black Knight's extended metaphor of his chess game with Fortune (616 - 709) recalls the narrator's statement that he decided to read rather than play at chess or tables (backgammon) in line fifty-one.[28] Fortune takes the Black Knight's "fers" after which he can no longer play. It is generally agreed that the fers is the queen, and in the context of the dream and of the Black Knight's loss there is no other sensible alternative.[29]

To suggest that the dreamer misunderstands the Knight's loss and takes it to be only the loss of a chess piece, is either to suggest that the dreamer does not understand the figure of Fortune to be allegorical, or that he is so naive as to believe that a game of chess is possible with her. More persuasive is the argument that the dreamer, a different character in terms of the reader's perception of the poem, consciously adopts his misunderstanding. Whether this is done through tact as Lumiansky and Bronson would have us believe,[30] or from a sense of propriety and delicacy as Kreuzer indicates[31], it is consciously contrived by the dreamer. Not, it should be noted, consciously contrived by the narrator, since, truth conditionally, he inhabits a different world. If this distinction is not preserved, then radically different interpretations arise. John M. Fyler, for example, finds that "the narrator ... suddenly finds himself in the wrong

genre. What began as a poem about insomnia, with overtones of a lover's complaint, abruptly turns into an elegy; and ... the narrator is slow to catch up."[32] Fyler is the one who is slow to catch up. The narrator is still writing a poem about insomnia right to the end. It is the dreamer and the Knight who change the genre.

Whatever the dreamer's reason for misunderstanding the Knight's loss, he provokes the Knight into a more literal explanation framed by three-fold repetition of his assertion of the dreamer's misunderstanding.

> Thou wost ful lytel what thou menest;
> I have lost more than thow wenest.
> (743 - 744)

> "Yee!" seyde he, "thow nost what thow menest;
> I have lost more than thou wenest."
> (1137 - 1138)

> 'Thow wost ful lytel what thow menest;
> I have lost more than thow wenest' -
> (1305 - 1306)

On the evidence, the dreamer knows full well the nature of the Knight's loss, but he continues to draw his tale out of him until the direct literal statement of his lady's death is made.

> "Allas, sir how? what may that be?"
> "She ys ded!" "Nay!" "Yis, be my trouthe!"
> "Is that youre los? Be God, hyt ys routhe!"
> (1308 - 1310)

It is beyond the scope of this analysis to deal at length with what is really the centre of the poem: the

Knight's eulogy of his good fair white. From the viewpoint of the narrative structure however it provides an unusual reversal. The central concern of the poem is wholly on the reported speech of the Black Knight and not in the hands of the dreamer or the narrator. Historically this is well explained by the need for the poet Chaucer to record the grief of his lordly patron and extol his lady's virtues. The efficacy of doing this by allowing the Duke himself to utter the words is obvious.[33] For example it indicates (if the well documented and supported occasion of the poem: the death of Blanche and the mourning of John of Gaunt: is accepted) the socially inferior poet's acknowledgement of his inability to laud adequately the Duke's wife.[34] The elegy and the eulogy can only adequately be delivered by a peer. This inequality in social position (and it does have support in the dream in the differing modes of second person address) has even been used as an explanation of the dreamer's misunderstanding. Donald Baker thinks the dreamer is confused by the Knight's "high style" in arguing against the notion that the dreamer is an understanding man.[35] He does not allow that the dreamer may be adopting the stance of the naif, nor that lines 558 - 559 indicate a perceptive dreamer.

Once the open admission of death is made the dream quickly ends. Even more suddenly the hert-hunting ends. If we see the Black Knight as the spiritual extension of the dreamer, then the end of the "hert-hunting" will occur at the moment when the spiritual side of his nature

acknowledges the previously unknown (or unacknowledged) loss that is the cause of his pre-dreaming insomnia. This new beginning in the unification of the physical and spiritual is an interpretation supported by the findings of Edmund Reiss. He argues that the bell which strikes twelve and awakens the dreamer indicates a union of the medieval numbers representing the physical (4) and the spiritual (3).[36] But for these cryptic indicatons, one is forced to agree with Stevens (1966), Eldredge (1969) and Walker[37] that there is no overt indication that anyone changes or is consoled in the course of the poem. Instead, any consolation that is achieved occurs outside the poem in the hands of the audience, the reader, who may well find some consolation for the inevitable loss and suffering of this world in the poem. This view does not prevent the dreamer from enacting the role of, as Gareth Dunleavy puts it, Lady Philosophy.[38] He does indeed help the Knight talk out his grief, but at the moment when the consolation might be expected to occur the poem closes and the reader is left alone with Blanche's death.

The union of the spiritual and physical achieved by the dialogue between the Knight and the dreamer occurs at the climax of the poem and contrasts with the narrator's physical and spiritual lassitude. As such it comments upon that lassitude and fulfills the role of the "phicisien ... oon" who can cure it. Although the narrator fails to return to the topic of his healing, the poem does.

The Poem's Narrative Structure

Before moving on to a final assessment of the narrator of the poem, it will be interesting to take a brief look at the structural elements that make up the various discrete narrative elements.

As we have seen there are three main structural units: the narrator's introduction, the story of Ceyx and Alcione, and the dream. Within the last there are two further divisions into the dreamer's and the Knight's tales. As we proceed through these narrative levels we gain a greater and greater amount of information about the world at each level. Julia Ebel has suggested that because of this effect of "framing", and the sense of perspective that it creates, we would be better to change our critical approach to The Book of the Duchess. She argues that instead of applying the criteria of the dream-vision of the Romance of the Rose, we should instead look towards parallels between Chaucer's narrative technique and the visual arts.[39] She sees the repetitions and verbal echoes as decorative rather than narrative or substantive. The three structural units she sees as "three receding planes which are differentiated from each other by an increasing complexity and fullness."[40] The first level is the least defined while the story of Ceyx and Alcione is "both more extensive and more emotive." The third plane is that of the Black Knight, "the Book's most articulate, most elaborately described, and most engaging figure." While it is possible

to argue that the narrator is the most engaging figure, and while, as I have said, I consider the dream outside the Knight's tale as another distinct structural unit, her argument has merit. Particularly when she sees each successive plane as dominated by figures who are analogous, but increasingly defined. So we move from the undefined malaise of the narrator to the grief of Alcione to the extensive account of the Knight's love and loss. As a result we are drawn to the heart of the poem (in fact the reader is aided in his own "heart-hunting") by the use of perspective, just as we are drawn to the significance of a painting by the use of the same device.[41] In the case of The Book of the Duchess the movement is also away from reality, via literature to the world of fantasy or the imagination and ultimately the circle is completed by a return to reality. The heart of the poem then becomes the moment of climax, and it is here that the reader's author's stance will be perceived - in the centre of the poem rather than outside it behind the narrator.

The narrative follows a similar pattern. At the first we have the poet, the reader's author who presents his narrator. On first impression this narrator is not merely a fictitious first person speaker, but is the supposed writer of the lines we read, the poet who "put this sweven in ryme." This narrator in turn presents us with a series of other tales embedded in his own. So we have:

1. The narrator's present

1.1. The events of the other night

1.1.1. The Tale of Ceyx and Alcione

1.1.2. The Dream

1.1.2.1. The locus amoneus

1.1.2.2. The Knight's tale.

The narrator is dulled by lack of sleep and cannot understand the meaning of the dream he has, yet he is able to put the whole 1334 lines into rhyme. This logical gap between the narrator as we know him and his ability to produce the literary artifact is, as we have noted elsewhere, almost universal to the production of first person narrators and is not in itself a persona marker. Yet in combination with other markers it can contribute to the undercutting of the narrator's integrity.

Other persona markers have already been noted in the reading of the poem. First and most obvious is the overall structure of the poem. The series of embedded tales forms a hierarchy which silently suggests the next level at which the poet creates the narrator and his tale. The organisation of those tales, with the move from reality to fantasy and their increasing complexity, belies an ordering mentality and imposes constraints which are not evident in what we know of reality. The discrepancy between the narrator and the reader's author which this belies is the first step in the postulation of a persona.

Secondly, those verbal echoes and repetitions which

serve to root the dream in the narrator's reality, and serve a unifying structural function, also impose themselves as a series of symbolic instances which again we do not associate with reality but with art.

On balance, however, the evidence does not suggest that the narrator is a persona, since these markers are common to most first person narration and, although necessary, are not sufficient in this case to force the reader to postulate a persona. Of the four options outlined at the beginning of this chapter it is the first: that the poet creates a narrator, a dullard, who tells the story, which best accounts for the narrative structure. The poet presents the dullard rather than adopting the stance of a dullard and undercutting the integrity of that stance. The narrator is undercut, and it is clear that his presentation as a dulled, self-interested insomniac does not tally with the view of the reader's author gained from the poem. But to establish whether the narrator is a persona or not it is crucial to assess where the reader judges the reader's author's opinions to be presented. These are represented by the implied negative of the narrator's views, but here these views are represented by another character, the dreamer. We have already noted the inversion which allows a character in the poem, the Black Knight, to become the author of the most crucial part of the poem. By an analgous inversion the dreamer is the 'narrator' who displays the intellect and sensitivity we associate with the author. He in turn, although he is a

facet of, and a creation of, the narrator, acts as covert critic and commentator on him. We do not hear the narrator commenting on the dreamer because he does not understand him. He merely presents him to the reader, including his apparent misunderstandings of the Knight's loss, without gloss. But in the sensitive way he helps the Knight talk out his grief, the dreamer presents the way the narrator should approach his unacknowledged sorrow. In a reversal the commentary begins on the inside of the poem and works its way out. It is as if the reader's author is at the centre of the fiction (where the poem is in fact at "its most fictitious") and the reader perceives him there rather than behind the narrator. It is by this device that Chaucer manages to efface himself and direct his irony at the narrator from inside the poem rather than from without. Similarly if there is a pattern of consolation it moves in the same way: from the author at the centre (represented by the dreamer), toward, ultimately, neither the Black Knight nor the narrator, but the reader. If this reader is John of Gaunt, then those who wish to see the poem in its historical context can applaud the poem as a successful consolation for the bereaved Duke. But within the parameters we have established for the true persona to exist, the narrator does not qualify as a persona. In the dreamer there is a character who represents the author's views and opinions, but he is a character much as any dramatis persona is, and the views he shares with the author do not make him an authorial persona.

So despite the existence of many persona markers, the truth conditions of the narrator's tale are consistent, and fictional in relation to the reader's author. The reader's author's stance is perceived to be at the centre of the poem in the perceptive dreamer, not in an ironical portrayal of the narrator. If the narrator is a persona he must be a persona of the dreamer, who, since he is purely fictional and not authorial, cannot produce an authorial persona.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER SIX

[1] G.L. Kittredge, Chaucer and His Poetry, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1915).

[2] James R. Kreuzer, "The Dreamer in the Book of the Duchess", PMLA, 66 (1951), pp. 543 - 547. Kemp Malone, Chapters on Chaucer, (Baltimore, 1951). Bertrand H. Bronson, "The Book of the Duchess Reopened", PMLA, 67 (1952) pp. 863 - 881. Talbot E. Donaldson, "Chaucer and the Pilgrim", PMLA, 69 (1954), pp. 928 - 936.

[3] Martin Stevens, "Narrative Focus in The Book of the Duchess: A Critical Revaluation", Annuale Mediaevale, 7 (1966), p. 17. Citing Margaret Galway, "Chaucer's Hopeless Love", MLN, 60 (1945) pp. 431 - 439.

[4] R.M. Lumiansky, "The Bereaved Narrator in Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess", Tulane Studies in English, 9 (1959), pp. 5 - 17. Wolfgang Clemen, Chaucer's Early Poetry, (London: Methuen, 1963). John M. Major, :The Personality of Chaucer the Pilgrim", PMLA, 75 (1960) pp. 160 - 162. J. Burke Severs, "Chaucer's Self-Portrait in The Book of the Duchess", PQ, 43 (1964) p. 27, n. 1. The adjectives are those of Kreuzer, (1951), p. 546.

[5] Earle Birney, "The Beginnings of Chaucer's Irony", PMLA, 54 (1939), pp. 637 - 655. Stephen Manning "That Dreamer Once More", PMLA, 71 (1956) pp. 540 - 541. Dorothy Bethurum, "Chaucer's Point of View as Narrator in the Love Poems", PMLA, 74 (1959), pp. 511 - 520. Bernard Huppé, A Reading of the Canterbury Tales, (Albany: State University

of New York Press, 1964), pp. 21 - 28.

[6] Thomas J. Garbaty, "The Degradation of Chaucer's 'Geffrey'", PMLA, 89 (1974), pp. 97 - 104. The citation is from p. 97.

[7] All references to The Book of the Duchess will be to The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, ed. F.N. Robinson, Second Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 266 - 279. See also his notes pp. 773 - 778.

[8] Stevens, (1966), pp. 18 - 19.

[9] Lumiansky, (1959), p. 5. It is possible that if, as Lumiansky says, it is the loss of a loved-one, she could still be his "one physician" and not Christ.

[10] Robinson, (1974), p. 774.

[11] Major, (1960), p. 160. Laurence Eldredge, "The Structure of The Book of the Duchess", Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa, 39 (1969), p. 145, argues against the need for consistency in character.

[12] Bethurum, (1959), p. 513, does see a psychological connection. For her the dream "offers relief from reality" in which the dreamer escapes his own suffering.

[13] Robinson, (1974), p. 774.

[14] J.O. Fichte, "The Book of the Duchess - A Consolation?", Studia Neophilologica, 45 (1973), p. 57.

[15] Birney, (1939), pp. 643 - 644, takes the view that the narrator is a whimsical caricature of the poet, but there seems little textual evidence to suggest whimsy.

[16] Bronson, (1952) too, thinks that the dream is framed in the narrator's melancholy and does not cure it as some suggest, p. 868.

[17] Delasanta, "Christian Affirmation in Book of the Duchess", PMLA, 84 (1969), p. 248.

[18] See ibid., p. 249.

[19] Fichte, (1973), p. 57.

[20] Since medieval people did not generally wear bedclothes, the coincidence of both the dreamer and Alcione being naked would be unremarkable were it not for the verbal parallels between each reference, their connection with the Knight's metaphorical nakedness, and the positioning of each at the end of the line - the effect is of a refrain.

Compare Alcione : "hir in bed al naked" (125)
Dreamer : "in my bed al naked" (293)
Black Knight: "deth hath mad al naked" (577)

Donald C. Baker sees this nakedness as an indication that they are all "bereft". "Imagery and Structure in Chaucer's Book of the Duchess", Studia Neophilologica, 30 (1958), p. 25. In the case of the first two the parallel seems so close as to be almost an echo, and consequently its structural function seems to override any metaphorical interpretation.

[21] Delasanta, (1969), p. 249, notes this too.

[22] See John B. Friedmann, "The Dreamer, The Whelp, and Consolation in the Book of the Duchess", Chaucer Review, 3 (1969), p. 149.

[23] This dream-logic has been discussed by several commentators notably Kittredge (1915) and Manning (1956). Others, particularly Stevens (1966), p. 18, express some caution at attributing twentieth century dream-theory to medieval works. However it is only within the dream section of the poem that these logical dislocations occur. Therefore it seems safe to assume that whatever medieval theory of the meaning and importance of dreams dictated, the strange logic of dreams had also been noted.

[24] Edmund Reiss, "Chaucer's Parodies of Love", in Chaucer the Poet, eds. Jerome Mitchell and William Provost, (Georgia, 1973), pp. 33 - 34.

[25] Not only is this play on words a pun, it is another instance of echoing of concerns from one tale to another - Alcione's heart becomes a hart-hunt which becomes the Knight's heart-ache.

[26] I have chosen to refer to the-narrator-in-the-dream as simply "the dreamer". Kreuzer (1951) argues that "a distinction must be made between the Dreamer in the dream and the Dreamer awake, the narrator". He believes the dreamer is a new character, since he awakens refreshed from sleep, whereas the narrator is dulled by lack of sleep. (p. 546.) Bronson (1952) insists on a similar division (p. 868) arguing that the dreamer changes once the dream starts, losing all his sorrow which is externalised

in the Black Knight (p. 870). I share these views.

[27] See for example Huppé and Robertson, Fruyt and Chaf, (Princeton, 1963) and D.W. Robertson, Preface to Chaucer: Studies in Medieval Perspectives, (Princeton, 1962) who share the view that the dreamer and the Black Knight are aspects of the poet (or narrator). Friedmann (1969) in particular sees the Black Knight as a projection of the dreamer's spiritual state (p. 146). Eldredge notes that the dreamer and the Black Knight share a move from the present to the past, the former through the memory of his good fair white (p. 135).

[28] For a discussion of the opposition between Fortune (whose games are chess and tables) and Nature (or "Kynde") see Lumiansky, (1959), p. 5.

[29] J.G. Ebel, "Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess: A Study in Medieval Iconography and Literary Structure", College English, 29 (1967), p. 203, note 20, suggests that the dreamer's "misunderstanding" of the metaphor is due to his use of "fers" much as a twentieth century man would use the word "piece" as derogatory of a woman. That is, he understands that it is a metaphor, but does not understand its literal referent.

There is no doubt that the move of the Medieval queen made it much less powerful than its modern counterpart, and it was by no means the strongest piece. (Benjamin S. Harrison, "Medieval Rhetoric in the Book of the Duchess", MLQ, 25 (1934), p. 430, is wrong in saying that the queen was "next in importance to the king.") Its loss would

therefore not be fatal. In terms of the metaphor, however, no other application of the word "fers" than to the queen makes any real sense, and the insistence on a strict parallel between the queen's power and her importance to the Black Knight seems unnecessarily pedantic. The shorter moving Medieval chess queen spent more time alongside the king and had a more specifically defensive role than her modern counterpart. Even if only in this respect, her loss would be more sorely felt by the King. For discussions of the chess motif in The Book of the Duchess see Franklin D. Cooley, "Two Notes on Chess Terms in the Book of the Duchess", MLN, 63 (1948), pp. 30 - 35. W.H. French, "Medieval Chess and the Book of the Duchess", MLN, 64 (1949), pp. 261 - 264.

[30] Lumiansky, (1959), p. 9. Bronson, (1951), p. 544, and Bronson, (1952), p. 873. See also P.V.D. Shelly, The Living Chaucer, (Philadelphia, 1940), pp. 48 - 49.

[31] Kreuzer, (1951), pp. 545 - 546.

[32] John M. Fyler, Chaucer and Ovid, (London: Yale University Press, 1979), p. 69.

[33] Bethurum, (1959), p. 513.

[34] Manning, (1956), p. 540.

[35] Donald C. Baker, "The Dreamer Again in The Book of the Duchess", PMLA, 70 (1955), p. 281.

[36] Reiss, (1973), p. 36.

[37] Denis Walker, "Narrative Inconclusiveness and Consolatory Dialectic in the Book of the Duchess", Chaucer Review, (Fall 1983), p. 2, places the only possible

instance of explicit consolation in the narrator's concluding remarks.

[38] Gareth W. Dunleavy, "The Wound and the Comforter: The Consolation of Geoffrey Chaucer", Papers in Language and Literature, 3 (1967), p. 24.

[39] Ebel, (1967), pp. 197 - 198.

[40] ibid., p. 198.

[41] ibid., p. 199.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A MODEST PROPOSAL

Introduction

Attempts to account for the satiric message of Swift's A Modest Proposal have centred upon the nature of the proposer in the light of his similarities and dissimilarities with Swift. As we will see in the first part of this chapter few have discussed just how the vision of Swift which must be the starting point for this comparison, is to be gained. Generally the opinion which is presented in the literature is that there is an accepted view of Swift and his opinions which is shared by the commentators and needs no further comment. Take for example the following extracts. "The last part of the sentence is unmistakeably ... Swift himself",[1] or "... Swift can be heard speaking as clergyman and philosopher ... For the length of one sentence he merges with his created speaker."[2]

Where this "Swift" is defined, it is biographical material rather than textual evidence that is used. So we see "Swift himself was anything but disinterested. ... he wrote with directness and passion to Alexander Pope ... that he was strongly agitated to see Ireland sunk in such dire circumstances".[3] Such an approach receives its general justification in statements such as this.

> The first unspectacular but essential step to the recovery of Swift as a major and universally meaningful author, was the construction of a truthful biography.[4]

While the usefulness of biographical data to the elucidation of a writer's work cannot be denied, such treatments of the Proposal lead to a view of the narrator based on similarities with Swift, a view which in turn is based on a priori knowledge of his life. Under this treatment the narrator is not seen as a function of the reader's author who appears in the text. The intention in this paper is to construct a vision of the narrator in relation to the reader's author, and hence conclude whether or not this narrator can be considered to be a true persona.

A large part of the confusion over the exact nature of the narrator is caused by Swift's double use of indirection. We have in the Proposal both the indirection of irony and the indirection of a narrator who is at least partly fictional. Under such circumstances it becomes difficult to determine whether the proposal to eat the children of Ireland is the literal statement (which we, the readers, take as ironical) of the reader's author, or is the literal statement made by an insane fictional proposer who is unaware of the ironical level, that ironical level being the sole preserve of the reader's author.

By applying those criteria which have been established for the reading of narrative to the Proposal, this chapter will reveal the possible truth conditions of the statements in the text, and reveal in turn the position of the

reader's author vis-à-vis these statements. It will then be possible to determine which of the two types of indirection is operating, or indeed if both are in operation simultaneously. We will then be in a position to establish whether a persona exists in the Proposal. Should no persona be found we will be in a position to outline just what type of narration we are faced with.

Critical Views of the Narrative Source

That there is indeed a problem can be seen by the diversity of critical opinion of the nature of the narrator. Some commentators see the projector as a fully realised character quite separate from his creator. Ricardo Quintana, for instance, emphasises that since we do not confuse the dramatist with his characters, nor take the play as a direct expression of the writer's personality, so we should not confound the writer and his work in non-dramatic forms of literary art. Swift, Quintana believes, writes "uniformly by way of dramatic satire. He creates a fully realized character and a fully realized world for him to move in."[5] In the case of the Proposal Quintana believes the world we see is "twice refracted ... in the enthusiastic imagination of a typical projector, and ... further distorted through parody."[6] Despite his insistence on the projector as "a fully realized character" Quintana does acknowledge that there are two levels of refraction. Later we will see that others share this view.

Unlike Quintana, Thackeray and Craik place no fictional projector between the Proposal and its readers. Thackeray believed that the railing against children, England, and men in office, was all part of Swift's make-up, verifiable from his life and letters.[7] In Sir Henry Craik's opinion it is Swift who with "the calm deliberation of a statistician calculating the food supply af a country", details the proposal. The whole is a

"sarcasm", applied with "deadly seriousness of purpose", a joke "laden with grave and torturing bitterness." [8]

Thomas Lockwood accounts for the speaker of the satiric message he hears by recourse to a wide range of tones. He rejects those students of Swift who have said "that the secret of the work is a particularly horrifying kind of ironic impersonation by means of which Swift creates a more or less fictional character, the "economic projector", who is the putative author of the Proposal", arguing that attempts to show how well Swift impersonates end up talking of a character who sounds just like Swift.[9] In this he supports Ehrenpreis' view that Swift speaks in character, that is, ironically.[10] Lockwood believes that the projector as persona is an interpretative invention which has "worked to obscure and oversimplify some of the most essential qualities of the work".[11] Further, he notes that the postulation of a persona in the Proposal has led to the belief that "one must think of the work as having mainly two tones of voice; the flat and innocent tone of a supposedly 'typical' projector, and, occasionally breaking through, another more obviously emotional and knowing tone that is out of keeping ... in other words Swift's voice."[12] Lockwood goes on to say that the range of tones is much wider and all are products of an ironical Swift.

In his discussion of A Modest Proposal Robert Uphaus notes the duality of the reader's response to the reasoned and reasonable language of the Proposal. He sees this as

an example of the psychological phenomenon of "approach-avoidance" where the reader is attracted to the method (logical and rational) while being repulsed from the conclusion (cannibalism).[13] This point was originally made by F.R. Leavis, who held that the "matter-of-fact tone [of the Proposer] induces a feeling ... of assent, while the burden ... compels feelings appropriate to rejection."[14] Uphaus points out that the inclusion of the list of Swift's previous proposals suggests that "he wishes to decrease and eventually obscure the distinction between the speaker's modest proposal and Swift's own prior proposals."[15]

If we ignore Uphaus's association of the author with the real life Swift, and note only the reasonableness of the prior proposals, then we are still left with a decreased and obscured distinction between the proposer of the outlandish cannibal scheme, and of the other sensible ones. Uphaus's concluding comments stress the duality he sees in the speaking voice.

> [There is a] problematical and necessarily disorienting effect of A Modest Proposal; namely, that what initially appeared to be a grotesque but palpable fiction, advanced by an ostensibly fictional speaker, may also be construed as a reasonably accurate historical estimate of, and solution to, the deplorable state of Ireland. [Swift moves back and forth between] the seemingly closed system of coherent fictional references [and] the open and problematical world of their [the readers] experiences and expectations.[16]

There seems little disagreement among these critics that in the Proposal there are two distinct voices, one

ironical, and one literal. The contention is over whether they belong to separate speakers, a proposer and an author, or are they the product of one voice, the author's, speaking at one moment ironically and at the next literally.

Such an alternative is inadequate in that it does not allow that a speaker can both share Swift's (the reader's author's) views, and hold opinions, or in this case espouse a proposal, which must be at variance with those views. Nor does it allow that the whole can operate as anything but a unified vision of one man's view.

The remainder of this chapter is an attempt to construct a view of the speaker and the truth conditions of what he says. It will then be possible to return to the question of the narrative source in order to determine whether or not we are dealing with a true persona. To some extent this approach is open to the criticism that it treats the Proposal as narrative, much as we would treat a novel, rather than as a satire where the tenets of characterisation and narrative revelation do not apply. Yet even Charles Beaumont, who argues so persuasively for analysing the Proposal by recourse to the tenets of classical rhetoric, allows a distinction between the rhetorical method and the character of the speaker.

> He [Swift] had to make the projector humble enough to gain the reader's approval and sympathy and confident enough to gain the reader's confidence in his ability and qualifications with his subject. Added to this double problem is the fact that, while both of these ends were being accomplished, the projector had to be kept sufficiently dense to sustain the irony.[17]

In fact the character of the projector is paramount even when the classical rhetorical devices are in play. As we shall see later, it is not the accomplishment of gaining the reader's confidence (few readers have such confidence in him) but the adoption of the normal rhetorical devices for gaining that confidence that is significant.

A Reading Of "A Modest Proposal"

The Title

As long ago as 1943 in "Swift's 'Modest Proposal': The Biography of an early Georgian Pamphlet", George Wittkowsky pointed out how accurately Swift captures the style and extremity of the contemporary political pamphlet.[18] He even suggested that the proposal itself is not so obviously inconceivable as a twentieth-century reader may at first think. To support his view he cites the case of The Fable of the Bees, by Bernard Mandeville in which it is advocated with total sincerity that as far as the ordinary folk are concerned:

> Not only should they be poor; "To make the society happy and People easy under the meanest Circumstances," he argued "it is requisite that great Numbers of them should be ignorant as well as Poor." [19]

The title of "A Modest Proposal" is a burlesque of the style of the political pamphlets of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, used to underline the purpose of the pamphlet, and at the same time indicate the reader's author's ironical mode.[20] The title also calls to mind the preoccupations of these pamphlets: the view that the people are the riches of a nation, that the economics are the economics of statism and are not concerned with the welfare of the poor.[21]

The Proposer

I have already considered in Chapter Four the clearest contextual marker to the discrepancy between the proposer and the reader's author: namely the rejection of cannibilism (and infanticide) by the culture of the encoding language. Once the proposer's scheme is revealed to the reader this contextual marker will operate to undermine the proposer's identification with the reader's author.

Let us consider now to what extent the proposer can be viewed as an autonomous consistent character delivering his proposal as known fact in his world.

His opening paragraph reveals a dispassionate observer who describes the lot of the beggars and their children as "a melancholy object", and who establishes his viewpoint as being that of one who "passes through" rather than is involved. [22]

The proposer is fascinated by the mathematics, economics and logistics of his scheme to feed the people of Ireland. Other proposers, we learn, are to be judged only on the accuracy of their computations. His fascination with his own computations allows him to overlook any other possible reservations, and he can consequently juxtapose his proposal that the children will contribute to the feeding and clothing of so many, with a paragraph mentioning the "horrid" practice of women murdering their bastard children. [23]

Scarcely has he begun to consider such "horrid" practices when he again plunges into more computations, calculating the number of children, how many will survive, how many will be required as breeding stock, and so on. The language he uses owes more to the farmyard than the nursery as he seems to justify his scheme (or escape its full personal impact) by treating the children of the poor as animals. [24] In dehumanising the victims of his proposal he distances the crime. The use of the language of diminution and the impersonality of statistical computation both contribute to this. Viewed in this way the use of these devices can be justified as a normal human reaction in the proposer. Subconsciously unwilling to face the horror of his own scheme, he retreats into the safe and morally neutral ground of statistics arguing persuasively for the advantages and accuracy of his calculations. Similarly later after actually stating his scheme, he advises "the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month", but then as the humanity suggested by the word "mother" and the inhumanity of his directions for the dissection of the carcass are felt to clash, he again retreats into calculations.[25]

Immediately after this comes one of the passages that have been attributed to Swift speaking in <u>propria persona</u>.

> I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very <u>proper for landlords</u>; who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have the best title to the children.

For the first time the proposer takes the side of the poor and the young against the wealthy, in which group the landlords must be included. The word "devoured" is used in both its literal sense (eat the children) and its figurative sense ("feed" on the parents economically) and the proposer is aware of this double use. (That is, the truth-conditions of both are satisfied in the world in which he makes his proposal.) The reader is faced with an apparent shift from distaste for the poor, betrayed through his language, to condemnation of the wealthy landlords. The movement is not in the position of the proposer, however, but in the direction of his attack. There is no reason why the proposer cannot both approve of his scheme to eat the children, and disapprove of the landlords for contributing to a situation which necessitates such a solution. Despite any blame he may apportion to the landlords he is insane enough to propose infanticide and cannibilism as a solution to the problems of Ireland.[26] The incongruity which the reader feels between the text of the proposal and his own contextual abhorrence of cannibilism creates irony as Muecke has predicted. In the "landlords" passage, however, the incongruity is between two elements of the text - the double use of the cannibilism motif - and momentarily the contrast with the context is lost in the reader's apprehension of the irony.

The strategy adopted here to account for the "landlords" passage as consistent with a unified voice - the proposer - can also be applied to another contentious

section; the crucial "other expedients" passage.[27] If the reader apprehends that these schemes which the proposer asks that "no man talk to me of", are approved of by the author he must also allow that the proposer would also approve were there "some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice." It is in the absence of any such attempt that the proposer puts forward his insane scheme. Once the reader accepts that the proposer shares some of the views of the reader's author, then the contentious "landlords" and "other expedients" passages need not be seen as inconsistent interpolations by that author. Consequently, when the proposer mentions in an aside that he could "name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without [salt]", then the condemnation of the English is both the proposer's and the reader's author's.

The proposer's attempt at the end to deny any personal advantage in his scheme displays his own self interest under the guise of disinterest: he will not suffer the consequences of his own proposal.

This discussion has shown that, even in the more contentious instances, it is possible to view the proposer as a single consistent speaker, much as Quintana advocates. All of the statements made in the proposal share the same truth-conditions.

Truth Conditions of "A Modest Proposal"

That the proposer shares some of the views of the apprehended reader's author does not necessarily mitigate against his existence as a distinct character - distinct that is from the reader's author who created him.

The question which will determine whether the speaker is seen as a persona (within the meaning of that term as it is defined here) is whether or not the speaker's autonomy is undercut: whether or not we are given any indication that the speaker is aware of his own fictiveness. The unfolding narrative provides us with two significant moments when the speaker's autonomy is brought into doubt. As I have argued, it is possible to justify both in terms of the proposer's character, without making them necessarily the sole preserve of that proposer or of the reader's author. No duality of tone is necessary to satisfy their truth-conditions.

In addition neither of these critical instances necessarily undercuts the autonomy of the speaker.

The Reader's Author

Charles Beaumont and Edward Corbett have done much to point the way to the consideration of Swift, the reader's author, from the text of A Modest Proposal. Beaumont in particular sees the hand of the creator in the organisation of the proposal along the lines of traditional classical rhetoric. [28] The projector, he notes, is "the ingénu type, a somewhat diffident, inexperienced person who has come upon the scene without being in complete touch ... [and] is at the same time a bit cocksure."[29] He emphasises the projector's traits as compassion, self-confidence and competence which add up to a "stable personality". [30] Yet when he moves on to consider other rhetorical devices, particularly diminution and refining, he fails to consider the effect of the proposer himself uttering these words. If the character of the projector is established as Beaumont suggests, then it is a mistake to consider only the effects Swift creates by his use of these devices, and not to consider the effect that the use of these utterances has on the reader's vision of the proposer. The proposer may go through the motions of establishing himself as humane, for instance, but as we have seen, his advocacy of cannibilism seriously undermines this. It is in the discrepancy between the proposer's attempt to establish his good character by the use of classical rhetorical methods, and his patent failure given the nature of his proposal, that the hand of the reader's

author is evident. It is a clever, articulate proposer who speaks the proposal in the form we read it - be he also insane, and be the form faithful to the tenets of classical rhetoric. There is no justification for claiming that it is Swift who intended a word to have a meaning all along but which "he carefully avoided expressing", but that it is the projector who "assumes that all agree as to the state of the kingdom."[31] Both statements are made by both the speaker and the reader's author; indeed everything in a fiction is.

Edward Corbett's view of the narrator takes into account the difficulty of distinguishing between the creator and the speaker. His vision of the proposer is of "a man who at the beginning ... gives the impression of being serious, expert, and well-meaning but who gradually reveals himself to be shockingly inhuman and naive." As a result "the style of the essay will not be Swift's style; rather it will be a style appropriate to the character that Swift has created." [32] Corbett goes on to analyse many aspects of the style of the Proposal and indicates how they contribute to the reader's picture of the proposer. He also notes discrepancies from Swift's style in his other writings.

The picture that we gain of the reader's author in the Proposal is, as with all fictional texts (and especially those containing an overt first-person narrator) gained by implication. The cultural freight carried by the notions of cannibilism and infanticide will serve to imply that the

reader's author disapproves of the scheme, as we have already seen. In the absence of any further evidence this "definition by exclusion" would be as far as we could go. However we have noted that in the two crucial passages on the "landlords" and the possible "other expedients" the proposer and the reader's author are perceived as sharing a view. Sharing a viewpoint does not suggest any fusing of the speaker and the creator. Both see the advantages of the other expedients and both disapprove of the landlords, but only the proposer approves of this scheme to rectify matters.

In the absence of any significant undercutting of the proposer as a distinct and discrete character, we must conclude that we are not, here, dealing with a true persona. His existence as fact in his own world is never thrown into doubt. In conclusion then I find no evidence for the multiplicity of tones detected by Lockwood and Uphaus. Instead, Quintana's assertion that the proposer is a fully realised character quite separate from his creator is justified under a truth-conditional account.

The narrator of the proposal is a self-revealing insane projector. His insanity is evidenced by his scheme. He damns his own proposal and himself by pointing out the "horrid" practices already in existence, but failing to realise the true nature of his own suggestion. As a humane, reliable proposer he is undercut, but as the consistent discrete speaker he is not. While he is capable of irony at the expense of the English, the pervading irony

is solely the preserve of the reader's author. In the Proposal then we are faced with two parallel forms of indirection: a fictional speaker and a pervading ironical mode.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER SEVEN

[1] Robert C. Elliott, "Swift's Satire: Rules of the Game", ELH, 41, No. 3 (1974), p. 419.

[2] Maurice Johnson, "The Structural Impact of 'A Modest Proposal'", Bucknell Review, 7, No. 4 (1958), p. 240.

[3] ibid., p. 239.

[4] Swift, ed. E.L. Tuveson, (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp. 4 - 5.

[5] "Situational Satire: A Commentary on the Method of Swift", University of Toronto Quarterly, 17 (January, 1948), p. 130.

[6] ibid., p. 133.

[7] William Makepeace Thackeray, The English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century, (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1869), pp. 30 - 33, reprinted in Jonathan Swift: A Modest Proposal, ed. Charles Beaumont, (Columbus: Merrill, 1969), pp. 19 - 21.

[8] Sir Henry Craik, from The Life of Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's Dublin, (London: John Murray, 1882), reprinted in, ed. Beaumont, pp. 22 - 25. The cited passages are from pp. 23 - 24.

[9] Thomas Lockwood, "Swift's Modest Proposal: An Interpretation", Papers in Language and Literature, 10 (Summer 1974), p. 254.

[10] Irwin Ehrenpreis, "Personae", (1963).

[11] Lockwood, (1974), p. 255.

[12] ibid., pp. 255 - 256.

[13] R. Uphaus, "Gullivers Travels, A Modest Proposal, and the Problematical Nature of Meaning", Papers in Language and Literature, 10 (Summer 1974), p. 276.

[14] "The Irony of Swift", Scrutiny, 2 (March 1934), pp. 364 - 379.

[15] ibid., p. 277.

[16] ibid., pp. 277 - 278. For other related views see also Martin Price, Swift's Rhetorical Art: A Study in Structure and Meaning, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 71, who sees the projector as an independent entity, an ironic mask. Maurice Johnson in "The Structural Impact of A Modest Proposal", Bucknell Review, 7, No. 4 (1958), p. 234, says Swift feigns "an alien identity and situation, acting in character to achieve his satire." The "persona, the projector, is almost - but not quite - antithetical" to Swift (p. 239). Although he does believe that at one point Swift merges with his speaker when he talks of his vain idle and visionary thoughts which he had before coming up with this proposal. (p. 240). Oliver W. Ferguson in "Swift's Saeva Indignatio and A Modest Proposal", Philological Quarterly, 38 (October 1959), pp. 473 - 479, does not see the projector as distinct from the reader's author at any time.

[17] Swift's Classical Rhetoric, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1961), p. 18.

[18] A Journal of the History of Ideas, 4 (January 1943), pp. 75 - 104.

[19] ibid., p. 79.

[20] K. Williams, Jonathan Swift and the Age of Compromise, (London: University Press of Kansas, 1958), p. 51. Two samples will serve to illustrate the point. A Scheme For Supplying Industrious Men with Money to carry on their trades, and for better Providing for the Poor of Ireland. (David Binden, Dublin, 1729). An Essay or Modest Proposal, of a Way to encrease the Number of People, and consequently the Strength of this Kingdom. (1693).

[21] As well as Wittkowsky, other articles of note on the economic background to the Proposal are: Louis A. Landa, "A Modest Proposal and Populousness", Modern Philology, 40 (November 1942), pp. 161 - 170, which deals with Swift's attack on the contemporary view that people are the riches of a nation: Jonathan Swift, "Maxims Controlled in Ireland", reprinted in The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift D.D., ed. Temple Scott, 7 (London, 1897 - 1908), in which Swift demonstrates that maxims such as the above may have applications in other countries, but not in Ireland. Landa cites Sir William Petty, "A Treatise of Taxes and Contributions", in The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty, ed. Charles M. Hull, (Cambridge, 1899) and Sir Joshiah Child's A New Discourse of Trade, (London, 1787) as proponents of the maxim that populousness could be equated with wealth. Landa goes on to discuss later, and contrary, views. See also Landa's subsequent work: "Swift's Economic Views and Mercantilism", ELH, 10 (1943), pp. 310 -335. In "Swift's Saeva Indignatio", Ferguson

argues that Swift was in accord with the "proposals of other writers on Irish affairs" (p. 477), suggesting that the extent of the burlesque is perhaps best limited to economic projectors.

[22] Jonathan Swift, A Modest Proposal, ed. Charles Beaumont, p. 11. All references to A Modest Proposal will refer to this edition. Martin Price in Swift's Rhetorical Art, p. 72, sees the "profession of sentiment in 'melancholy'" as "counteracted by the classificatory interest ... 'three, four or six children'." I would take issue with him that the word "melancholy" here can be seen as "genuine compassion".

[23] A Modest Proposal, p. 12.

[24] See Ricardo Quintana, The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 43. Also cited and amplified by Charles Beaumont in "The Classical Rhetoric of A Modest Proposal", pp. 22 - 29. Both note a similar effect in the fourth book of Gulliver's Travels.

[25] A Modest Proposal, p. 13.

[26] Price notes this insanity but believes that the criticism of the landlords and the other mercantile classes is Swift's: a "strange combination of insane possession on the part of the speaker - one of those quiet men with a terrible glint in their eyes - and of savage representation of men preying upon each other in the respectable guise of mercantile policy." To the Palace of Wisdom, (New York: Doubleday, 1964), p. 190.

[27] A Modest Proposal, p. 16. See The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, 12, pp. 1 - 90 passim for the "Irish Tracts", in which Swift advocates these solutions. John Middleton Murry sees this list of solutions not as a positively advocated course for Ireland, but as a series of his failures, as measures "he had specifically urged them to adopt. They had refused them; he now discards them, one by one." Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography, (London, 1954), p. 428. Cited by Maurice Johnson, "The Structural Impact of A Modest Proposal", p. 237, n. 3.

[28] Charles A. Beaumont, Swift's Classical Rhetoric, (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1961), pp. 15 - 43.

[29] ibid., p. 18.

[30] ibid., p. 22.

[31] ibid., pp. 30 and 32.

[32] E.P.J. Corbett, "A Method of Analyzing Prose Style with a Demonstration Analysis of Swift's 'A Modest Proposal'", in Reflections on High School English, Gary Tate, ed. (Tulsa: The University of Tulsa, 1966), pp. 106 - 124. Reprinted in Beaumont ed., pp. 73 - 93. The quotation is from p. 81.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A SOLDIER'S TALE

> Consider: If an author, passing a mirror, were to see one day not himself but some character of his invention, though he might be surprised, might even question his sanity, he would still have something by which to relate. But suppose, passing on the inside, the character should glance at his mirror and see, not himself, but the author, a complete stranger, staring in at him, to whom he has no relation at all, what is this poor creature left ...?

Samuel Delaney, Dhalgren, (New York: Bantam, 1975), p. 401.

"I almost think that the same skin,
For one without - has two or three within."
Byron, Don Juan, XVII.

Introduction

We have now considered two narrators who have been styled personae, and seen that under a truth conditional reading they are found not to be so. Although both are undercut as reliable narrators, their fictiveness is not brought into question. In the final analysis both the narrator of The Book of the Duchess, and the projector of A Modest Proposal can be adequately accounted for without recourse to the term "persona" as it is defined here.

In this final illustrative chapter we will now turn to an example of a narrator who is found to be a persona under a truth conditional account: the narrator of the twentieth century New Zealand novel A Soldier's Tale by M.K. Joseph. By an analysis of the narrative structure of this novel, I will account for the narrator's tale within a truth conditional framework, noting the various persona markers as outlined in Chapter Five, which lead the reader to postulate the existence of a persona.

While eschewing the use of biographical data about the author in the establishment of a descriptive definition of persona, it is still interesting to note that M.K. Joseph has described the primary narrator "I" in A Soldier's Tale

as "(a not-self whom I employ to do my grumbling for me)".[1] In that aside there exists the paradox that is persona; the apparent negation of self in "not-self" also affirms, or at least draws the reader's attention to the place of the self in the narrator. As we will see, the narrator will tend just as conclusively to establish himself as a purely fictional character, as he will to establish himself as the self which pens the words before us.

The tale begins without a passage discussing writing and violence (in which the narrator talks to himself) that Joseph says he had included in the original draft. Had the passage not been deleted we would have had a much clearer and earlier example of markers pointing towards both an author and a fictional narrator than we do in fact have. In particular I refer to the following lines.

> Soldiers are kinder and gentler than one or two of the people you meet around universities for example. I know, having served out my time in both.[2]

The effects of these biographical details on the reader (that the speaker has been a soldier and an academic) would have been twofold. Firstly they would create a set of facts which later could be applied to either a character or an author depending on which the reader decides the narrator is, and secondly could create facts which the biographical critic could cue in with facts in Joseph's own life and thus in some way verify the parallel between the narrator and the creator. In this

case the marker, in isolation, points in both directions as an indicator of an author and of a character. Later, and with more evidence, the emphasis may fall on either one of these two possibilities, but essentially the first chronologically will contain the ambiguous application.

The Narrator Introduced

As it is, Joseph chose instead to open with only the facts concerning the soldiering past of the narrator, "In nineteen forty-four I was a bombardier artillery clerk with four years' service, ...".[3] An intimacy is established with the reader, "I don't suppose you'll want to hear the technical details:"[4] which at once serves the purpose of creating a fiction of oral delivery (emphasised by the use of the non-literary "don't" and "you'll" contractions), and to suggest the narrator is an author since it would require a greater suspension of disbelief to imagine a fictitious character speaking directly to us. However, at this stage such evidence can only be an indication and not a prescriptive rule pointing towards either author or character. The intimacy thus produced can be seen, I think, as the modern equivalent of that achieved by Swift in referring to his "gentle reader" or Fielding's similar devices in Tom Jones. For the first three pages of the book we continue in this relationship with the narrator who purports to tell us nothing but facts. However he soon warns us indirectly that he may move from his role as passive narrator of Saul Scourby's story to that of creator, "... it's hard to separate what he told me from what I imagined out of it, what I divined, what I added of my own ... but in the main I've tried to write the book he might have written, if he could."[5]

We are then asked to forget the existence of the

narrator/bombardier and to "imagine him [Scourby] telling his story, squatting on a ration-box".[6] But the character of the Bom will not let him leave the narrative alone and allow us this illusion, just as the demands of not only this tale, but all story-telling do not allow the teller complete disinterest. However firm the Bom's intentions are to promote his role as merely the mouthpiece of the original creator he finds himself drawn into the role of creator more and more.

From this early stage the reader is presented with a narrator who is himself in a questionable relationship to the truth conditions of the story he tells. While he purports to narrate Scourby's tale as known fact (both the facts of the tale, and the rendition of it), he acknowledges that he may at times narrate his own creation - a tale as known fiction.

Saul Scourby Narrates

So Scourby's story begins, with a first person narrative suited to the Bom's stated narrative intentions, yet even in the first line of the tale the Bom is there:

> Did I tell you, bom (he said), did I tell you about this bit of stuff I had in Normandy?[7]

There are no inverted commas, either here or anywhere else in the book, to destroy our illusion that this is Scourby talking, and ostensibly the use of the parenthetical intrusion replaces their function in telling us this is now the voice of Scourby we are hearing, and no longer the Bom. But the intrusion has a subtle role as a marker towards that trait in the Bom's make-up which shows in his desire both to be in the tale as much as possible as well as in the tale as it exists as a fact or fiction. To put it more simply he wants to be the original teller of the tale (and this will become clearer later when we look at the Bom's attitude towards Scourby) as well as the current relator of the tale told to him. In this desire we see a clear marker to character, while at the same time the nature of that marker is closely tied to the process of creation; the author's role.

In addition, the structure of that first sentence makes nonsense of the intrusion in its function as indicator of who is speaking, since "bom" occurs immediately before "he said" and in as much as the bom is

addressed by the speaker, we know it is not him speaking.

Bom's next comment is purely narrative in function, "(And as he told me this he sipped his tea and rum, staring over the rim of the cup into the thin blue flame of the Primus.)"[8] but it does serve to remind us of the nature of the narrative as well as of the existence of Bom. By comparison his next comments contain both his personal views on "simple people" like Scourby, and insights into the mind and emotions of the soldier. He does not regain his distance from the creative role by remarking that, "At least, that's how I see it -"[9]

The personal opinions we are given arouse our interest in the character of the Bom, and his existence becomes of intrinsic interest and does not just serve as a technical device. As we saw in the case of the speaker in Sterne's Tristam Shandy, the emphasis is on the mechanics of telling the tale, but also on the author of that tale. It is significant that in his opinions we see the first sign of what will be a recurring prejudice against "simple people" and the like, revealed unconsciously. This technique is similar to Jane Austen's method of allowing her characters to reveal their own faults through their own words rather than through her own authorial comment, but here it is the narrator of the tale who does it. The revelations of the Bom's personal prejudices act as markers pointing towards character in the authorial narrator. Moreover it should be noted that in even the apparently self correcting statement "At least, that's how I see it -" the Bom reveals he has

begun to interpret and comment on the action of the tale, and interest us in these observations.

The Bom Lends a Hand

As early as page twenty-five, the Bom abandons his attempt at presenting Scourby's tale in the first person and switches to the third person. The intrusion (again bracketed) which introduces this change begins with a further instance of the Bom's prejudice: "Like most working-class people, he was careful about his speech": but in the very next sentence this superiority turns into respect, self abasement (since the Bom is after all a writer), and if not identification, then empathy with Scourby.

> The newly emancipated words which a bourgeois intellectual or writer or student scatters around like verbal confetti had only a small place in his vocabulary.[10]

Saul, the Bom tells us, would not be as good at relating the coming sexual scene as he would, so he guesses "rather more than elsewhere, following out hints and broken sentences in a way he might hardly have approved."[11]

Surely this tells us as much about the conceited and prurient side of the Bom as it does about the simple Scourby. Yet had the narration been resumed in the first person immediately after the sexual scene we might still be inclined to explain the Bom's coup as the result of Scourby's reticence. However, when the soldier awakes in the morning, Bom is still firmly in charge of the narrative and gives us a glance or two inside the head of Scourby as

well as a brief biography of his early years with detailed descriptions of his parents and grandparents. Although the tale Scourby tells is apparently embedded in Bom's (and we have discussed the effects embedding has as a persona marker sufficiently fully in earlier chapters to be able to pass over them in detail here), the edges of each are blurred by this, and many future instances of Bom's failure to delineate between his speaker's tales. Here the Bom's position in the creative process becomes quite overt, is in fact "framed" by the window which appears as "a square of faint paleness in the dark,"[12] at the beginning of Bom's version of Saul's musings, and as "a square of pale early sky,"[13] at the end. Blatantly no such mediation occurs in Saul's account of his awakening.

> Well, next morning ... I wakes up pretty smartly when I felt her move out of the bed.[14]

At the same time as the narrator drifts towards an authorial role, this tendency is countered by further revelations of his character, in the matters of conceit and sexual voyeurism mentioned above as well as in education. He speaks French well (for Belle): and does not hesitate to show it: "On se sert de moi comme pot-de-chambre."[15] And he is damned from his own mouth when he says in his intrusion which introduced his description, "[t]o watch [the sex act], even to describe it, is to impair one's dignity. Voyeurs are people without shame or self-respect."[16]

Having said this, we must not lose sight of the advantages for the ultimate creator of A Soldier's Tale; M. K. Joseph; of the Bom's abrogation of the creative role in the story. It serves to parallel Joseph's (and in fact all writers') difficulties in writing first person narrative, while apparently releasing him from the necessity of facing these difficulties.

When Bom reverts to Scourby's first person account, it is in a similar form to the initial introduction of that account, "Well, next morning (as he told it) I wakes up pretty smartly when I felt her move out of the bed."[17] The facts as we have seen, seem at variance with those narrated by Bom because Scourby spends no time in the quiet contemplation attributed to him. Unless Scourby woke up twice, the first time narrated by the Bom, and the second time when he himself speaks, we must assume that the earlier musings were all the work of Bom's mind. Certainly there is no mention by either narrator of Scourby falling asleep again, and no mention of the first awakening by Saul.

The very layout of the text draws the Bom into the tale at this stage as well. The brackets opened at the beginning of his intrusion before the sex scene are never closed, either at the end of the intrusion, or at the transition from Bom's to Scourby's narrative. The two voices, which are of course both the Bom's, are merged where previously they were kept distinct.

Belle's Tale

Saul Scourby (or is it Bom?), also has problems separating his narrators as we see when he is reporting Belle's speech. Usually he only reports her words in brief bursts of a sentence or less, invariably inserting "she says" into it. On one significant occasion, however, she relates an incident where SS men take vengeance on a village for the death of three of their officers. Containing as it does, no speech allocation pointers such as "she says" and no less than six sentences delivered in fluent, accurate English, we are drawn to the conclusion that the Bom's hand is at work either rewriting the (emotional) incident narrated by Saul, or creating the whole thing. It seemed that with "(as he told it)" Scourby's role as a narrator was being re-affirmed, but it is evident that his integrity is permanently damaged. Now the reader will always be awake to the possibility of the Bom's voice intruding even when it is not overtly signalled. It is as if we are being reminded of the number of layers of narrative intrusion (a complete list of which I will attempt later) that stands between the truth and the account we are experiencing. If this is so then we are in a curious world of fiction where the commonplace has been reversed and the art no longer exists in concealing the art but in revealing it. The philosophy is similar to Baudelaire's defence of make-up on women where he is insistent art should not be assigned the sterile function

of imitating nature. He adds, "There is no point at all in trying to hide cosmetic. ... It ought to proclaim itself - if not boastfully, at least with a degree of candor".[18] Much of what I have said of Persona Theory involves the recognition of this principle; that to successfully feign or veil, the true nature of the veiled object must be revealed, however indirectly, and the truth of the veil as veil be shown as well. What Brecht did in the theatre by reminding his audiences of the true fictive nature of the experience they were undergoing, Joseph takes a step further in literature by fictionalising the fictive process before destroying any suspension of disbelief we may have achieved.

Bom Creates the Past

As if to contradict this, Bom's next words are signalled quite clearly as his and in a way we have come to associate with him: the bracketed intrusion. The scenario is a BBC news bulletin that Scourby listens to on the radio.

> (He didn't say what was on the news, ... But it gave his story, as he told it, a curiously timeless and elemental feeling, as if it took place within a bubble of space and time insulated from the outside world ...) [19]

Just so, and if that were the feeling we as readers were to take from the tale then would that be wrong? No, not if it were Scourby's story and we took the meaning as "he told it". Instead the Bom improvises, providing us

with a news report about "collabos", Nazis, and grim Frenchmen who express hatred of the traitors. All transparently relevant to Belle's lot, but all quite divorced from Scourby's rendition. As readers we laugh at Bom's unceasing attempts to insert elements that will act as comment or symbols of a literary nature into the verbal narrative he uses as his starting point. Elements planted, as Ruthven notes (and in a way designed, I am sure, to damn both sides of the comparison equally) "With the green-fingered deftness of a graduate in Creative Writing".[20]

What we must be careful not to do is to miss the closely related, but more subtly included symbols that recur throughout the tale and point to the existence of an author. If we are not careful we will note the unconcealed art of the Bom's creative method and overlook the art of the author which the Bom's efforts should point us towards. What the Bom is discovering in the need he feels to add to his "original" is the fact that the author himself has already realised - that the world of a narrative is not the real world, but a word world which exists outside the events they describe and can consequently (and perhaps of necessity) take on meanings of their own both in relation to the real world, and in their existence as words, media, and fictions in themselves.

Perhaps Bom does not say that the word "love" cannot express totally, just as it cannot be totally consubstantial with, the emotion "love". (Or, as William

James put it, "The word 'dog' does not bite."[21]) But Bom does know that the true picture he is trying to describe will not look as he would wish without a few strokes from his own brush. His mistake is that he never quite gives up his quest for the photographic representation of the events nor totally understands the inherent fictiveness of the medium he is using. Somehow he believes that if Scourby mentions James's dog then if he can just be allowed to fill in the details of colour, bark and bite it will be as real for his readers as the flesh and blood original.

To return to my original point, we must be aware of the more subtly placed symbols that point to an author, while accepting the Bom's reasons for including his. An author's hand is most evident in the patterning and repetitions of words and symbols. As Ruthven has pointed out in more detail than is necessary here,[22] these include the juxtaposition of light (Marie Schellenburg) with dark (Yvonne, Scourby), the number three, as well as the more obvious echoes of Belle in the angelus bell, or the abbey bells rung by Scourby when he is trying to gain sanctuary for Belle (while in effect sounding her knell) or of the coincidence of Saul's initials being the dreaded SS.

The Author's Tale

All of these patterns, repetitions, and echoes, whether we see them as symbolic or not, or ironical or not (in the case of Belle's rescuer as well as her original

damnation both coming in the form of SS) do impose the kind of restraints we do not associate with the random world of 'reality'. Just as Christians see a God behind the design they see on earth, readers see an author behind the design they see in books. In recognising these author markers we must, in the context of A Soldier's Tale, acknowledge the comment intrinsic in the parallel between Bom's heavyhanded symbols and the more delicate author markers; that just as Bom had trouble with his narrative and created a fiction, so does this (and any) author have similar troubles and similarly creates a fiction.

While we note the overt symbolism and patterning of the Bom, he is undercut as the author by the more subtle patterning which we apprehend to be the reader's author's domain. And just as we see the problems of the Bom in preserving his relationship as reporter of Saul's tale, so we become aware of a similar difficulty at the higher level of the reader's author. The whole operates as a comment on the difficulty of maintaining a consistent position in relation to the factuality or fictionality of a tale; to maintain a consistent set of truth conditions.

Saul Again

We left the text with the imaginary news bulletin inserted by the Bom. Again, in the usual way the intrusion is end-bracketed, and Saul resumes his first person narrative, this time with no bracketed indicator such as

the "he said" or "he went on" that we have seen before. Apart from a parenthetical comment on the working-class scepticism of the media exemplified by Saul, Bom withdraws into the background for a while, and the next switch of narrators is from Saul to Belle.[23] Unlike Belle's previous speech Saul introduces it in his normal way with "she says" but when he glosses the tale she has to tell, unlike Bom he does not bracket off his own words, although Bom still does within Saul's speech: "(His imitation of Charles Boyer was very bad ...)". This creates an ambiguous effect.

Initially it indicates that the Bom, who is after all the inscriber of the words on the page, does not see the need to separate out the words of the two narrators as clearly as he does his own. This in turn points again to his attitude to the narrative role he employs. In his mind the story is Saul's and Saul is speaking, so all reported speech can be unified without brackets. The inconsistency of this stance is obvious in that when Saul is reporting Belle's words he stands in an identical relationship to her as Bom does to Saul, when he reports his.

The ambiguity occurs if we allow the possibility that the gloss is the Bom's. In fact the style of Belle's narrative is so similar to Bom's that it is not clear that the whole speech is not delivered in his words. And when Saul manages to report her forays into German ("schellenbaum") and French ("chapeau Chinois") with accuracy, when we know his style of French is more the

"Allay-vooz ong, comprennay?" [24] type, we know that despite his protestations Bom is firmly in the creator's role. His ability to keep himself distinct has always been limited but now increasingly the barriers between narrators break down, and it is as if Bom is being drawn into a vortex both by the complexity of the narrative framework he has constructed, and by his growing interest in the story. Although he has tried to tell a story he overheard, he has become drawn in, both by his nature and the nature of the narrative role, until he is a character in the story he is telling. To the reader this is quite acceptable, but of course to a narrator it is quite untenable and the only refuge he can find will be in a closer identification with Saul, since how can you become a character in your own story?

The narrative vortex begins, as we have seen, with the Bom abrogating Belle's voice. Then an intrusion occurs which, although bracketed, leaves us unable to attribute it with any accuracy to Saul or Bom although the style and use of brackets would suggest that it is the Bom. Yet it is Saul who "saw" it.

> (Suddenly, comically, she lifted the corners of her eyes with her fingertips, miming a stage Chinaman.)[25]

Then Saul steps in for barely a page before Bom (bracketed) describes Saul's actions as he tells the story

> (As he described this, he took out the other knife, ...)

after which Saul takes centre stage with his views on the way the "Poms" would have reacted to a German invasion. The word "Poms" is clearly the Bom's word, since it is an antipodean word for the English. Elsewhere Bom uses tapu, a Maori word, which gives the reader a further clue to his New Zealand origins. His view is none too flattering and Bom steps in again to express his reaction to Saul's words. Why, unless the Bom is now a central figure in his own story, would we be interested in his reaction?

Before we are allowed to dwell on this he brings us back to the Bom in the present tense, and while we are still being treated to his views, they are distanced from the events of 1944 and become associated more with the authorial than with character. At the same time we are fed more information about the biographical Bom - as if he can feel himself being sucked into the story and the past, and tries to redress the balance by reasserting his own identity. The balance between his existence as character (as known fact in the story he tells) needs to be balanced by an assertion of his authorial role (his existence in another "world" outside the tale).

Bom and Saul Merge

The brackets close and the narrative resumes, but now it is the Bom using the third person narrative without warning and without the excuse of the previous time: Saul's reticence on sexual matters. In fact the subject matter is

not delicate at all, and after only one and a half pages the first person account begins again, but this time with a subtle difference:

> It was one of them Yanks, Bom, said Saul, you know how ...[26]

There are no brackets around "said Saul", and Bom is now either realising he is in the same relation to Saul as Saul is to Belle (as noted above), or he is beginning to merge with Saul in some way.

This compromise seems to settle the narrative down and for a full nine pages it continues almost uninterrupted. When Bom does intrude twice, the first is a gloss on wartime attitudes to aftershave, and the second is a simple bracketed statement of Saul's actions as he narrates, with no attempt at comment or opinion. However the subject is the "flat hard muscles" of Scourby's arm. This is not the first time Bom has mentioned these characteristics of Saul's physique and it fits into a pattern of awe that he feels for the power of Saul. This awe stands in contrast to the (supposed) superiority he feels over Saul for his low class accent and prejudices. Although it may be taking things a little far, perhaps we can see in Saul and Bom two sides of the human personality - the active and the bookish. In many ways this echoes Chaucer's narrator in his early poems or more noticeably in The Legend Of Good Women, and in The Canterbury Tales generally. Perhaps more narrowly we could just say that Bom the writer (and only a

spotter for the artillery, not involved in the fighting itself, "not far enough back to be disgraceful and not far forward enough to be lethal" as Bom describes it[27]) sees in the man of action all that he is not and maybe wishes he were. Even to the extent of "becoming him" in his own story. The title, A Soldier's Tale, underlines the unity of Saul and Bom: a unity mirrored in their shared problems when narrating their tales as known fact.

Saul Scourby Demoted

Just as the narrative seems to be settling down to its former pattern, the Bom takes over again, and the narration ceases to be Saul's for exactly fifty pages. He begins with a bracketed intrusion in which he seems to claim even more for himself than just his previous imagination; now he can actually see his characters. This is the point when the tale ceases to be Saul's for a while, not only in narrative illusion but in actual source. Despite an attempt by Bom to descibe the scene around Saul and himself as the tale is told (and predictably the corporeal cook refered to is a corporal) the characters now exist completely in Bom's mind and so it is no surprise that he must take over the narrative role completely - how can Saul relate the contents of Bom's imagination?

So ...

> (Now as I'm writing this, I'm suddenly aware of them, and I can see them trudging down the road in the summer rain. ...)[28]

And he knows with quiet certainty what they are both thinking.

After this intrusion, the Bom relates the meeting between Belle, Saul and the soldier-priest in fine detail, yet he then pulls himself up, and admits that, "As I try to visualize the scene ... I am baffled ... I can see the pictures, and up to a point I can perhaps understand what they mean ... But both are also baffling "[29] His self-imposed withdrawal from the involvement he was lured into is increased when he refers to a news bulletin for Monday 19th February 1973 that he listens to while writing his story.

We are being told quite openly that the Bom is now trying to deny his influence on the interpretations to be put on events in the tale. He seems to realise that he has overstepped his intended involvement in the tale, and must now remind the reader of his existence as a living authorial being of the 1970's. But the whole effect is lost by the nature of the news bulletin. It deals with the body snatching of the former head of the Vichy government, Marshal Pétain, and it is not difficult to make the connection between the treatment of the hated collaborator and that of the more humble Belle. The constraint on reality that the coincidence of the Bom's writing and the news item entails must act as both a marker pointing

towards the existence of an author orchestrating the coincidence, and an undercutting of the independence that the Bom is using the incident to affirm. He supplies us with details of date, time, and place as well as the physical existence of the desk on which he writes and the transistor on which he hears the news, yet he is drawn in and tainted by the fiction by the very fact that the item has such obvious relevance to the story.

This provides a contrast with the news bulletin which the Bom provides details of, mentioned above. In that case the Bom (perhaps half humorously) suggests that we "improvise" and in his role as narrator creates the news item for us. By this stage however Bom is so much a part of the fiction that the news item he hears has a significance for the tale without any improvisation from him. The improvisation occurs at the next remove and implies an author involved in the same process that Bom was involved in creating his own news bulletin. We see the battle that the author faces in creating his text fictionalised in the Bom's efforts and given a new, ironical, twist when we realise that the author does it too. At this point the Bom is pure persona as he fights his battle against the two opposing forces of character and author that have a claim on his existence. And it must in the end be an unresolved battle, as every time he tries to affirm his existence as author, he at the same time provides evidence of his fictional side. Equally each time he provides evidence of his fictional side we must remember

that "he", the "author" in the text, provided that evidence.

As the tale becomes less one soldier's tale and more the story of the soldier who is now the writer, the exposition of the plot conforms more and more to the norms associated with fictional narrations than with factual ones. For example, Bom drops in references to a copy of Baudelaire's poetry that is a complete mystery to the reader until later in the book, and even later gives us a clue that the girl will die.[30] These breaks with the chronology that is the hallmark of Scourby's narrative technique, serve to turn the pace and control (particularly of tension) over to Bom. This in no way detracts from reader interest if the true focus of the tale is on Bom and not on the outcome of Saul's tale. If the reverse were the case, then such premature revelations - especially of Belle's impending death - would be disastrous for the story's suspense. In fact Belle's end is intimated in many less obvious ways too in the emphasis on Scourby's abilities with a knife, the threatening Maquisard and the general picture of Saul as a killer. But by now the book is less of a soldier's tale, and more of a tale about a soldier, told by an "observer" for the artillery.

Once the Bom's account becomes established as the norm for the narration he loses his vehicle for commenting on the events he relates and so he invents a new method - a parenthetic "authorial" intrusion in his own narrative!

> (Of such small actions is war made ... Soldiers, like anyone else, catch colds ... read the Daily Mirror ... and change their socks ...)[31]

Bom's identification with Saul is underlined here as Bom intrudes into his own tale in the same way he has into Saul's. Not only does he tend to become a character in Saul's tale (as Saul develops into a sort of surrogate Bom) he also becomes a character in his own book - a character whose narration in turn needs glossing. Yet even this transient distinction is soon lost, and the comments are inserted with only the formal separation of double spacing on the page. We learn that, "At intervals, while writing Saul Scourby's story," Bom has "been re-reading Alfred de Vigny's Servitude et Grandeur Militaires and thinking about it"[32], but the relevance of the Bom's reading this work is only peripheral to the supposed centre of interest, Saul's tale, and the mention serves to draw attention to Bom's 1973 existence outside the story. It also fills in the interval while Saul is "taking a turn outside". Bom attempts to keep the illusion of a time-match between the telling of the tale and the events narrated. (At other times it is a match between his tale and Saul's.) So when Saul returns his digression ends. It is as if he takes the opportunity to have an aside while Saul is absent.

The Bom in Centre-stage

Next, the centre of narrative interest shifts to Belle

as she tells her tale of how she became involved with the Germans and her history in the war up until now. As it stands it is the most formal piece of narrative in the book, uninterrupted by any other opinions or glossing. (It is of course narrated in the third person by Bom.) At its conclusion, Bom again tries to point out that the story is Saul's, "Now again I've been recreating what Saul understood of what she'd remembered, and told him, refining and reinforcing and enhancing those fogged photographs from the past."[33] But the fluency of the telling and the work of Bom's imagination have transcended Saul's influence so that the only voice the reader can hear is Bom's. To emphasise this the very disclaimer that Bom has just given us merges seamlessly into the tale, and for the first time the story and Bom's previously parenthetical comments are now married in the same voice, and textual layout. They are indistinguishable both in style and appearance:

> ... those fogged photographs from the past. And all the time the room darkened around them ...[34]

By the subtle manipulation of these arbitrary markers of parentheses, spacing and interpolation, the blurring between the various narrator's tales is achieved, until at this point the apparent embedding breaks down and the whole becomes the Bom's tale.

After the completion of Belle's history Bom makes the, by now inevitable, statement that he is only, "decoding ... a double decode in this case ... "[35] but somehow it is

not enough so he again resorts to his method of referring to himself in the present in the role of author. He describes in quite minute detail his cat and its current antics, and his old dog asleep on the floor. He manages to mention his desk, a model-cabinet and his couch, as if the details of his personal life reassure him, and us, of his true self. Yet even in trying to escape from his tale he places himself in it, for those details are now part of the book we read. And even while he employs the ultimate literary self reference - a mention of a page of the manuscript of the book; as he waves proof of his own authorial self under our noses; his own radio betrays him. It is playing "Cabaret", the theme song from the musical about pre-war Nazi Germany.

The Bom Withdraws

After this major break Bom tries to ease us back into the story in the "correct" narrative sequence by describing the scene back in 1944 at this moment in Saul's tale. We are shown the reassuring sights of the Bom nipping outside for a "leak", and Saul making a cup of tea ... just in case we had lost our grip on the true nature of the narrative we are hearing. Of course the breaks are in Saul's story ("By the time Saul Scourby got to this point in his story ..."[36], yet they occur in Bom's narration. The Bom's attempts to synchronise the two tales are attempts to affirm the actuality of the events described, and to

establish that this is again an accurate rendition (even to the moments when he broke his narration) of Saul's tale. But by now this asserts more about the teller than the telling. The action during the break centres on Saul making a cup of tea and the Bom having a "leak". It is as if there is an intermission during which the Bom and by implication we, the readers, should have a cup of tea and relieve ourselves so as not to miss any of the action when the story resumes. The atmosphere that this sort of television advertisement-break evinces is calculated to move the Bom out of the text and into our living-room as it were. So again Bom attempts to escape the fictional vortex that draws him into the text, and tries to achieve the same empirical footing as the reader.

After the tea-break he pulls out completely and the story resumes in Bom's version of Saul's first person account; decorated ostentatiously with Scourbian cockney rhyming-slang ... just in case we didn't realise:

> Well, you wouldn't Adam-and-Eve it ...[37]

But, the Bom cannot be kept out for long:

> Outside, it was one of them summer mists like they had in Normandy - remember? (And I remembered the golden mist full of dissolved sunlight, ... and I laid the memory of it alongside the cold creeping greyness outside the barn.) It looked sort of dodgy, ...[38]

The number of ways the Bom has of getting his word in has to be admired. Soon the original narrative method is resumed with the familiar bracketed intrusion from the Bom

and it is as if the bucket of water that Saul splashes on himself to wake up wakes Bom up too, and he realises what he has been doing. Unfortunately one of the first scenes Saul has to relate is a sexual one and Bom, with his new found resolve, cannot take over - making nonsense of his earlier take-over when he insisted Saul was reticent. Saul certainly doesn't show the fluency of Bom's earlier account but his message gets across without the stumbling inarticulation that the Bom has led us to expect. Our earlier impression that the Bom might have a streak of voyeurism in him is strengthened and we also suspect a certain prurience and jealousy in him; the interest in the sexual exploits of the simple lusty Saul by the bookish Bom.

And it is a book which brings Bom to the fore again. As Saul falls asleep Belle is reciting a poem by Baudelaire, and Bom grasps the opportunity to leap in, formal indications such as brackets forgotten.

> But we know what the poem was. It was Baudelaire's Invitation to the Voyage. I have it in front of me now, in the old edition of Flowers of Evil, published by Editions Verda, 11 Cite Dupetit-Thouars, Paris, and sold for twelve (old) francs. When did she give it to him?[39]

The Bom who, with his literary pretensions cannot resist giving the biographical details of Saul's early life, cannot resist giving the bibliographical details of the book as any good researcher would. But those kind of details are primarily the material of the non-fiction writer, underlining that the Bom, for all the problems he

has faced and compromises he has made, still believes he is merely re-telling a factual account factually. Or at least he wants us to believe he is. The question, "When did she give it to him?" echoes his earlier, "And did she give him the twelve-franc copy of Baudelaire?".[40]

On the other hand, the Bom's obssession with the book and the details of its giving to Saul, is directly linked to his addiction to the verifiably factual. He has in front of him, the very copy of the book that he mentions in the tale, containing her name; Isabelle Pradier, in her own hand. Such an intimate link with the woman and the tale is blown out of all proportion to its relation to other events in the book, simply by the Bom's ownership of the book. It is both a link that proves the truth of his account, and the only link with a tale which has become less and less factual and more and more his version of events as the narration proceeds. It must be borne in mind that the emphasis on the book is Bom's, not Saul's who only mentions the poem. As Bom reads from the book he says, "The dead poet begins to speak to the dead woman - " [41] The dead woman is, on first impression the sister of the poet, but in the context of the tale the poet also talks to the living Belle, indicating obtusely the future death of Belle. Bom translates the poem for us (how well he does it!) and supplies the possible meaning it had for Belle. In a fictional tale the reference would stand for the reader to interpret, but the Bom is committed to drawing (his) meaning out of the incident rather than allowing the

ambiguity and multiplicity of meaning that is the stuff of fiction.

Saul's narrative resumes, with at least the physical separation of double spacing in the text, and the introduction continues the trend towards the original narrative form, "Well (said Saul) what woke me up was a fly ..."[42]. Bom's slow withdrawal from the total involvement of the middle sections of the tale continues, and the ultimate end would be a return to the original narrative form. This will occur to some extent, although not by any means unequivocally. It is as if he tries to return to the original form, but the constraints of the fictive process and of the method he has chosen to relate the tale, prevent him. He has in reality lost control of his narrative method as his next intrusion illustrates. The brackets are still absent but the spacing is still present, and again he recognises that what he is about to relate in the third person is only an imagined reconstruction and not the authentic version which his omission of such a disclaimer tended to make us believe we were hearing. However, within his intrusion, there is a further, bracketed, discussion of Luc Peire's Environment Three and the light it throws on his view of how we stand between two mirrors in any stable relationship with the view stretching out infinitely in both directions. All very interesting, and calculated to parade his reading before the reader, but of only borderline relevance to Saul and Belle. The contents of the brackets could be omitted, if the tale that Saul has to

tell is all that is of interest.[43] But it does show us how the Bom undercuts his own attempts merely to tell the facts and paint the picture in the most vivid way possible, because here he extrapolates beyond the lot of the two chief characters, to that of the general; from the specific to the total human condition. His very character prevents him from avoiding these self-indulgent digressions into peripheral discussions. As readers we are pointed towards the character of our narrator by such digressions and away from his authorial role. We become interested in the teller not the tale. The digression on Environment Three refers to "mirrors of past and future", which Bom sees as forming "a lift, sinking down through endless selves."[44] A comment on the narrative process of this novel, as well as on life itself.

So after only four pages, Saul must step aside, and the Bom begins conditionally with, "The champagne in the orchard would have left him thirsty, ..."[45] but that is the only verb in that mood before the normal mood resumes. Yet he still glosses his own narrative to the point where he removes the metaphorical meaning from "he had his feet under the table." and dissects it for our eyes. And he inserts the traditional fictional/Hollywood technique of having his hero reflect on his childhood even though there is no evidence for this in Saul's own narration.

Belle asks Saul what it is like to kill a man, so, within Bom's speech, Saul returns to the prime narrative position. As the story unfolds Bom fills in the "current"

events; what Belle or Saul do as he tells it; and also what Saul said to him as he told him the story, "(Do you remember them sunsets in Normandy, Bom? ...)".[46] The narrative is almost unresolvably complex. Bom tells us, what Saul told him, he told Belle, in Bom's words, but with the intrusion of Saul's own words at the time he told the story to Bom - but those words themselves are in Bom's words. No wonder Bom has trouble controlling this mosaic of voices.

Despite all of the insights into Saul's mind that Bom has given us, he tries, right to the end, to re-impose the fiction that he knows "no more than [we] do what was going through his [Saul's] mind ... "[47], but by now we expect the contradictory material which follows almost immediately:

> What is he thinking? He knows there is no help, but he has entered ... into the fantasy of domestic life ... he almost believes it. ... Tenderness begins to grow in him. ...[48]

The change in tense from "was" to "is" gives us a clue to how this contradiction can be supported. In one case it is the Bom looking back on the events, while in the present tense he is actually back there, almost inside Saul's head reading his mind. The identification is nearly total between the story teller and his subject. In fact the Bom acknowledges that he held a double image of him; one he was looking down on at the burner, and one in the imagined past "doubly screened from me ..." [49]

The Bom does not understand the nature of the image he

holds and does not recognise that one of them is as totally imaginary as much of the story he has told. Fact and fiction, narrator as author and narrator as character, are confused in a kaleidoscopic narration which leaves the Bom in an ambivalent position both in regards to the story he tells, and his own existence. The markers we have noted have combined to produce a truth conditionally ambivalent narrator - a true persona.

The Bom Helps Saul With His French

For the last part of the story Saul is speaking again but the voices have become quite confused and the colloquial cockney is mixed with the fluent French, "(again I'm helping out Saul's French)"[50] not achieving the desired reconciliation since he has not acknowledged previously that he did help his French out; now it is too late and the impression that he abrogated Saul's account with his imagination has been created.

First person slips into third:

"I'd made a mistake (went on Saul)"[51]

So Saul's story ends, and Bom makes his final summary of his narrative efforts:

> Well, that's Saul Scourby's story as I've retold it and stretched it ... and no doubt put down more falsehood than truth.[52]

His belief that he can in the fictive medium of the

story, tell "the truth" persists, and he still believes that part of his tale can be more "real" than others if they are closer to what were the exact words of Saul. He never once suggests that what Saul, or any other of the narrators, might say, could equally be considered a version of the truth. For him there definitely exists a res gestae that can be metamorphosed into a literary form with no loss of the gestae. He fails to perceive the evidence that his own words provide. His own failure to impart the whole essence of the story by retelling Saul's tale does not open his eyes to the impossibility of narrating that incept of truth that is the actual event, either in terms of the story (what Belle really did) or in terms of the narrative (what Saul said she really did).

The Bom finishes his story "towards midnight on Bastille Day nineteen-seventy-three, whatever that may mean."[53] Just who is so naive that they do not realise the irony of the tale of the killing of Belle on the day La Belle France celebrates its freedom? Whoever it is, it can only "mean" in relation to the text. Yet the event relates to the authorial process (the writing of the text) and events outside the text (Bastille Day). The narrator is, again, both within, and outside the text, living an independent life as author, a life which also has significance in the fictional world.

The Narrative Levels

Ruthven, in the article already cited, identifies five narrative levels in A Soldier's Tale. I believe his schema can be extended on the evidence provided above if we consider a narrative level to be one at which an element of the historia rerum gestarum, the account of events, is or can be distorted. This then allows a multiplicity of narrative levels within the one narrator as we saw in The Book of the Duchess. At its most complex: in the case of what really happened when the Germans broke the resistance group: we have seven narrative events overlapping the truth.

(i) The Bom 1973 - Bom the narrator.

(ii) The Bom 1944 - Bom the narrator with Saul.

(iii) Saul Scourby 1944.

(iv) Saul Scourby earlier in the war when the events in the farmhouse occurred.

(v) Belle - when she tells her tale to Saul.

(vi) Belle - when the events happened, and the account of the Germans came to her.

(vii) The German(s) account.

(viii) The truth of what happened.

Further distortions of the narrative occur if we consider the reader's author who we perceive fashioning the account, and our own, the reader's, distorting effect.

With so complex a system of embedded narration the foregrounding of the narrative event is predominant, directing the reader's attention to the process by which

the tale comes to him. The role of the narrator is paramount, and his position in relation to his tale is crucial. The very structure of the story leads the reader on the first step towards the postulation of a persona - a consideration of the narrative act, the narrator's relationship to his tale and to the reader's author: in short to the truth conditions of the elements of the tale. And as we have seen, these truth conditions are consistent with those of a true persona in the case of the Bom in the narrative present.

Conclusion

It is the Bom in 1973 who the reader perceives as the authorial persona. Even as we receive information about his own idiosyncracies and his own part in the writing of the tale, we also receive evidence of the reader's author who is the motive force behind the Bom. A reader's author who, in fact, pretends to be the Bom, and at the same time provides us with the evidence for his own unmasking.

The balanced position of the narrator between an existence as character and author is enhanced by the use of the non-specific "Bom" appelation; colloquial, almost intimate, but at the same time depersonalised and general.

Finally, it is interesting to note that a knowledge of Stravinsky's A Soldier's Tale may also act as a marker for the reader. The hero of Stravinsky's work is Joseph, a soldier who forfeits his soul to the devil. Based on Russian folk-tales, the story tells of his trade of his fiddle for a book that tells the future, and his time spent with the devil. "Two days well spent, and then came the third."[54] If Saul (Paul's name before his conversion on the road to Damascus) can be seen as representative of mankind, as Joseph is in Stravinsky's Tale, then Belle appears as a Christ figure, crucified at the hands of man. This leads us to conclude that the murder will somehow redeem Saul. Further speculation about the connection between Joseph's and Stravinsky's Tales will not be productive here. For our purposes, it is the connection

between the hero of Stravinsky's Tale; Joseph; and the writer of this book; M.K. Joseph; which is central. On one level the link operates as an elaborate cryptic word game, and on another as a subtle indication to the narrative complexity of Joseph's Tale. We see an implied connection between the writer and the character in the Tale in their nominal similarity.

Interestingly enough in an interview with M. K. Joseph shortly before his death, he told me that the original story had been told by the model for Scourby to "the Bom figure" who had then told it to him. If his claim is correct he was not in the position of the Bom, but at one remove. However, as I have indicated throughout this thesis the views of the writer are perhaps best avoided. When Joseph talked of writing the book, he used words and phrases almost identical to those of the Bom. Two examples will serve to illustrate the echoes between what the Bom says and how Joseph recalled his tale.

> I wrote it quickly without too much revision - Joseph
>
> I've written without planning and with little revision - Bom[55]
>
> What happened went like that I think - as far as I can remember - Joseph
>
> So what happened went perhaps like this - Bom[56]

If we believe Joseph's claims then we may find little to distinguish him from his creation; the Bom; or we may be faced with Professor Joseph's public persona.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER EIGHT

[1] M.K. Joseph, "Beginnings", Islands, (December 1979), p. 520.

[2] ibid., p. 521.

[3] M.K. Joseph, A Soldier's Tale, (Auckland: Collins, 1976), p. 7.

[4] ibid., p. 7.

[5] ibid., p. 10.

[6] ibid., pp. 10 - 11.

[7] ibid., p. 11.

[8] ibid., pp. 13 - 14.

[9] ibid., p. 18.

[10] ibid., p. 25.

[11] ibid., p. 26.

[12] ibid., p. 29.

[13] ibid., p. 33.

[14] ibid., p. 33.

[15] ibid., p. 27.

[16] ibid., p. 26.

[17] ibid., p. 33.

[18] Eloge du Maquillage (In Praise of Face Paint) L'Art Romantique, Oeuvres Completes, ed. Jacques Crepet III, (Paris, 1925), pp. 95 - 100. Cited in Wimsatt and Brooks, Literary Criticism, p. 483.

[19] ibid., p. 38.

[20] K.K. Ruthven, "Joseph's Tale", Islands, (December 1979), p. 524.

[21] Patrick Hughes and George Brecht, Vicious Circles and Infinity: An Anthology of Paradoxes, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), p. 71.

[22] K.K. Ruthven, "Joseph's Tale", Islands, (December 1979), p. 527.

[23] M.K. Joseph, A Soldier's Tale, (1976), p. 42.

[24] ibid., p. 22.

[25] ibid., p. 45.

[26] ibid., p. 49.

[27] ibid., p. 7.

[28] ibid., p. 61.

[29] ibid., p. 70.

[30] ibid., p. 122. "The dead poet begins to speak to the dead woman." Apparently the dead woman is the sister of the poet, but within the tale she is also Belle if the tale is viewed from the Bom's temporal position in 1973.

[31] ibid., p. 82.

[32] ibid., p. 87.

[33] ibid., p. 97.

[34] ibid., p. 97.

[35] ibid., p. 109.

[36] ibid., p. 110.

[37] ibid., p. 111.

[38] ibid., p. 112.

[39] ibid., p. 122.

[40] ibid., p. 75.

[41] ibid., p. 122.

[42] ibid., p. 123.

[43] ibid., p. 126.

[44] ibid., pp. 126 - 127.

[45] ibid., p. 127.

[46] ibid., p. 133.

[47] ibid., p. 144.

[48] ibid., p. 145.

[49] ibid., p. 145.

[50] ibid., p. 147.

[51] ibid., p. 147.

[52] ibid., p. 151.

[53] ibid., p. 151.

[54] From the translation by Michael Flanders and Kitty Black.

[55] Joseph, A Soldier's Tale, p. 152.

[56] ibid., p. 127.

C O N C L U S I O N

My intention in this thesis has been to define and limit the application of the term "persona" in such a way that it can be used with precision in literary criticism. To some extent the term has lagged behind the changes which have occured in literary criticism since the advent of the New Criticism. In an age of reader and text based criticism, the persona has remained firmly rooted in the tradition of biographical criticism. In this thesis I have proposed a method of treating the concept which allows the critic to escape the charge of committing the biographical fallacy, while preserving the indubitable connection between the persona and the author.

Since the descriptive precedes the evaluative and interpretative in the literary critical act, it is only after this important step in defining the limits of the term, its relationship to other types of narration, and its relationship to the author, that the next step can be taken. This step is an attempt to recover the intentions of the putative author which must be crucial to the interpretative function. In order to do this the relationship of the speakers to the author must be ascertained. For this reason the isolation of a narrative stance which is distinct from other stances and which we have called the true persona, is not just an exercise in relational definition, or a minor contribution to a poetics of narration. It is also important in that it defines a

type of narration with a different and unique relationship to the author and to which a different strategy must be adopted in order to begin to recover the intentions of the putative author. Without a knowledge of the persona and of the differing constraints under which it operates, the act of interpretation will be made with an unsound knowledge of the author's relationship to the speaking voice. As a result, the accuracy of the interpretative act will be compromised.

This thesis has confined itself to these two functions: of description and the early stages of interpretation. What remains to be done is to develop an evaluative approach to the persona. That is, to establish what constitutes a good or a bad persona, and what it enables the author to achieve which other types of narrative do not.

Although the truth conditional approach adopted in this paper works well in the consideration of prose narratives, the same cannot be said of its application to poetry. A long narrative poem can be dealt with in this way, but the limited amount of information which the reader receives about the speaker in a short poem gives the reader room for only a highly subjective assessment of the narrator and his relationship to the author. Given that this is so, the application of the term "persona" to such poems seems unproductive and other strategies for assessing the position of the speaker must be used. These strategies could well be grounded in what this thesis has called the

Persona of Decorum, since style and its appropriateness seem better criteria for the consideration of such works.

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